

Wednesday May 15 1996

Algeria D 0.50	Hong Kong HK\$ 25	Osaka O 1.00
Andorra FF 10	India IN 50	Pakistan R 70
Antigua A\$ 20	Indonesia Rp 1,000	Poland Z 5.50
Bahamas B\$ 20	Israel N 1.00	Portugal E 200
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Bermuda B\$ 20	Latvia L 100	Singapore S\$ 1.00
Bhutan Nu 100	Lebanon L 1,500	South Africa R 10
Bolivia Bs 100	Lithuania Lt 100	Spain P 166
Bosnia DM 1.00	Malaysia M 1.00	Sweden S 10
Brazil R\$ 100	Malta M 1.00	Switzerland SF 3
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Howard under fire after admitting six-year forensic flaw puts at least 12 convictions in doubt

Chaos over IRA bomb cases

Alan Travis and John Mullin

CONFIDENCE in the British criminal justice system was dealt a devastating blow last night when the Home Office announced that the discovery of contaminated forensic equipment could lead to the convictions of at least a dozen IRA bombers being overturned.

Michael Howard, the Home Secretary, ordered an independent inquiry into the disclosure that could affect some of the most high profile cases of the last six years.

The Home Office announcement said that scientists at the Ministry of Defence's Port Hales Forensic Explosives Laboratory, at Sevenoaks, Kent, had discovered by accident on March 14 that the centrifuge machine used to identify explosives evidence in bomb cases had been contaminated with traces of Semtex for more than six years.

Mr Howard was subjected to a barrage of angry criticism following the announcement, which comes as a fresh embarrassment for the Government after the unreliability of forensic evidence had played such a crucial role in the case of the Birmingham Six and a string of other miscarriages of justice cases.

The discovery was first reported to Mr Howard two months ago. He admitted that evidence from the laboratory was used to secure convictions in at least a dozen terrorist explosives cases.

But Home Office sources confirmed that the independent inquiry may find more cases are involved if it proves that the contamination spread to other parts of the laboratory.

A total of 38 people charged under the Prevention of Terrorism Act have been convicted of offences involving Semtex, since the contaminated centrifuge was brought into service in 1989. It is believed that the dozen cases

identified by Mr Howard yesterday are among them.

Although they may not necessarily have been convicted on the forensic evidence alone, among the cases called into question are the Cricklewood bomb blast, the Warrington gas explosion and the attack on the Israeli embassy in Kensington, west London.

Many of the cases will go to the Criminal Cases Review Authority before being referred to the Court of Appeal. For any sentence to be set aside it will have to be shown that the flawed forensic evidence was a crucial factor in the conviction.

The centrifuge machine at the centre of the scandal had been in use until 1989 at a nearby laboratory. Scientists have not been able to pinpoint the origin of the contamination but believe the centrifuge — the size of a microwave oven — was already contaminated when they started using it.

The problem lay in a small rubber bung, which was discovered to have absorbed a trace of RDX — a substance found in Semtex and other explosives — and which separated the glass test tube holding the sample being analysed and its metal carrier.

"By normal standards the explosive detected was tiny, but nevertheless should not have been there," said Mr Howard in a Commons written answer. "There is a small theoretical possibility that any casework sample showing RDX traces may have been affected by the centrifuge contamination."

Later, the Home Secretary added: "The chances that there has been a miscarriage of justice as a result of what has been discovered are very small. But I don't want to take any risks or leave any stone unturned."

The shadow home secretary, Jack Straw, demanded a full statement from the Home Secretary in the Commons today. "Mr Howard's written answer raises more questions than it answers, including how many defendants we are talking about."

Neil O'May, a solicitor at Bindman and Partners, which has represented several defendants against whom the prosecution has presented evidence of handling explosives, said: "I am astonished that a flaw of this magnitude has been allowed to continue for seven years."

Gareth Peirce, who represented Daniel McBreen, a Londonderry man, who was held for three months in late 1989 solely on what proved to be a false test for RDX, said: "In the aftermath of the Maguire and Birmingham cases, the laboratory had a chance to clean out the stables, but this shows they never took the opportunity."



Mr Howard at yesterday's launch in London's National Theatre of an initiative against drugs

Questions of evidence



Hugh Jacks: most evidence from explosive tests



Danny Doherty: accused of planting 12 bombs in London

HUGH Jacks, aged 37, was regarded as an excellent employee on the farm where he worked near his home at Sauchie, Alloa. He was an unlikely IRA terrorist, with 29 previous convictions, mainly for minor fights.

Most of the evidence against him came from his association with Robert Fryers, 44, a Belfast bouncer, caught red-handed with Semtex as he boarded a bus in London.

As well as the association with Fryers, much of the evidence against Jacks came in the form of explosive tests. His home was used to store explosives, but his defence argued he was an unwitting stooge. He was jailed for 20 years for conspiracy to cause explosions.

Thomas McAuley, and was acquitted at a re-trial.

NICHOLAS Mullen, 42, was jailed five years ago for 30 years, for his role in a London bombing campaign. As well as forensic evidence against him, police discovered papers and notes which also incriminated him. He also left the country, flying to Zimbabwe before trying to return several months later. Police found Semtex dumped in a north London waterworks near his home in Wood Green, London.

SEAN McNulty, jailed for 25 years in August 1994 for conspiring with others to cause explosions, might find it tricky to argue any advantage from flawed forensic testing. As Justice Stephen Mitchell announced sentence, he threw up his thumbs and cheerfully claimed: "That's no problem." The construction worker from North Shields, Tyne and Wear, was jailed over the bombings of an Esso oil terminal in his home town and a British Gas depot on Tyneside in June 1993.

DANNY Doherty, 23, from Co Dublin, was jailed for 25 years for conspiracy to cause explosions along with Gerald Mackin. He and Mackin were said to have planted 12 bombs in London in seven days in October 1993. There were no injuries. Police discovered Semtex and other bombing paraphernalia behind a bath panel in another ac-

Reports by John Mullin



Labour rift widens as Prescott targets Brown

'It would surely be detrimental to allow an overbearing role for the Treasury'

John Prescott yesterday

LABOUR'S deputy leader, John Prescott, last night fired another shot across Gordon Brown's storm-tossed bows when he rejected the shadow chancellor's plans to expand the Treasury into a super-ministry for "long-term economic and social renewal".

Amid renewed wrangling over policy and influence within Tony Blair's team, Mr Prescott used a trade union speech in Bournemouth to welcome Mr Brown's call for a public debate on the department he could inherit within

a year. But he added: "I am less sure than some that the track record of the Treasury justifies widening its role to encompass larger economic and social renewal — of it becoming a so-called Super-Treasury." He accused it of "stifling initiative and innovation" for many years.

"It would surely be detrimental to our commitment for a dynamic economy to allow an overbearing role for the Treasury which will then dominate every aspect of Government life."

To add fuel to Tony Blair's shadow cabinet fire, Michael Meacher, shadow employment minister, speaking in Sweden yesterday, said a

single European currency could cost millions of jobs, rather than create millions as its backers insist.

Mr Prescott has long favoured a beefed-up Department of Trade and Industry as the best means of getting a better performance from British manufacturing. In Bournemouth he likened the Treasury's role to "keeping an eye on how much is left in the kitty... but when prudence becomes ossified into dangerous obstruction, and when rules become obstacles to our economic and social development, then we are dealing with a very serious matter indeed."

Last night Mr Blair's office

said that "any suggestion of a rift is dancing on a pinhead," but MPs, themselves pledged to tight discipline, are bound to look askance.

Though Mr Brown shares Mr Prescott's views on the patchy post-war history of the Treasury, and Mr Meacher's distinctive economic views are well known, their pointed interventions come as the shadow chancellor is under fire from some colleagues for his role beyond economic policy and his tendency to act without enough consultation.

In a speech to the Manchester Business School two weeks ago Mr Brown laid out plans for making the Treasury not just a ministry for

finance — committed to creating a stable macro-economic framework — but "a successful engine for new ideas. A Labour Treasury will be both a ministry of finance and a ministry for long-term economic and social renewal. It will be innovative rather than obstructive, it will be open rather than secretive, and it will encourage new ideas not stifle them."

Mr Prescott's target yesterday was unmistakable, even though the phrase "super-ministry" — to describe new

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Sketch

Hurtful talk brings tears to the eyes



Simon Hoggart

THE TORIES revealed their new slogan yesterday: "Yes it hurt. Yes it worked." This acknowledgement is described by advertising pundits as a "high-risk strategy."

First night

Gray's anatomy of guilt and grief

Michael Billington

Simply Disconnected

Minerva Theatre, Chichester

THE sequel, they used to say in Hollywood, is never as good as the original. In the case of Simon Gray's Simply Disconnected, it is actually better.

against crime to vote in favour of, and not against, the Government's increasingly successful law and order measures," he said.

Thinking, not unreasonably, that he had said more than enough, Mr Major began his reply. But nothing, not even the sight of his own Prime Minister on his feet, would shut Mr Yeo up.

"Will New Labour finally tell the truth and say that the Tories were right all along?" he finally finished.

Mr Major said that he was glad he had paused for this second part of the question — "it was well worth waiting for" — but so egregiously greasy had it been, that even the Prime Minister could not resist an ironic smirk towards the Labour benches.

Bernard Jenkin (C, Colchester N) gladdened the hearts of the whips by asking a question as greasy as any oil-slicked seagull.

"This was the kind of over-the-top insult which could achieve the impossible, and make Peter Mandelson popular with members of the Labour Party. Anyway, it was Tony Blair's press secretary, Alastair Campbell, who once worked as a gigolo, in the south of France."

The weirdest moment came when Teresa Gorman asked about the single currency. It would cost Marks & Spencer's alone, she said, £100 million to change their tills.

"Will you bring this to the attention of M. Chirac?" she asked. "Underwear will go up in price in Paris and Lyon, and all the other places where M&S sells."

I wonder how the conversation will go. "Er, Jacques, I don't quite know how to put this, but it's about Teresa Gorman's knickers..."

"Quoi, mon ami?" "She wants to make sure they come down. And she believes that you can help."

"Zut alors, Jean! Anuzzer slice of that beef, if you please. Now ah accept absolutment your assurance zat there is no link between chicken shit in zurr feed and zurr mad cow-disease..."

called Julian bursts in with a gun claiming he is Hench's son by a discarded mistress.

Quite a lot for one day, not to mention the pregnant home-help, who may indeed be carrying Hench's child.

As Gray says, the earlier play was about a man who kept that world at bay by pretending it did not exist; but he is writing, far more searchingly, about a man so weighed down by guilt over his wife's death that he is almost quite unreachable.

Before, Hench showed a talent to abuse; now he is less an ironic point-scorer than a tragic figure haunted by the consequences of his actions.

Gray's structure is calculatedly artificial: characters show remarkable memory for remarks of 25 years ago and the scene with the gun-toting supposed son is schematically neat rather than dramatically convincing.

But Gray's point, in the words of the old hymn, is "changing and decay in all I see" — his characters, however buoyant they may seem, have been warped and corroded by time.

Richard Wilson's production is not without humour but the abiding impression is of Alan Bates as a wonderfully clenched Hench: his blanched features and ghostly stillness are relieved only by a final shocking spasm of suppressed sorrow.

This review appeared in later editions yesterday.

Chancellor Clarke urged to raise interest rates to damp down effects of rising consumer spending

Bank warning on inflation

Larry Elliott Economics Editor

THE Government risks breaching its tough inflation target unless interest rates are raised over the coming months to damp down the long-term effects of rising consumer spending, the Bank of England said yesterday.

In its first muscle-flexing exercise for a year, the Bank warned the Chancellor, Kenneth Clarke, against any attempts to stoke up demand ahead of the election and made it clear that any attempt to cut borrowing costs below

the current rate of 6 per cent would be opposed.

The Bank's quarterly inflation report stressed that the dangers of the economy lurching back into recession were now receding and that a cautious approach was vital to avoid policy mistakes that had led to previous boom-bust cycles.

Mervyn King, the Bank's director of economics, said that the last quarter-point reduction in base rates in March could be justified as an "insurance policy" against a downturn in the economy.

"There is a case for continuing to pay the premium for a short period. But it is not easy to see a case for increasing the premium".

The inflation report is intended to monitor the Government's progress towards hitting its inflation target of less than 2.5 per cent for the Retail Prices Index excluding mortgage interest payments in two years' time.

Yesterday's report said that the short-term outlook was good, with the weakness of growth dragging 50-called underlying inflation below 2.5 per cent over the next 12 months.

"After that, it is probable that inflation will move along a rising trend, reaching 2.5 per cent some two years ahead. It is marginally more likely than not that inflation

would be above 2.5 per cent in two years' time were official rates to remain unchanged throughout that period".

The Bank said there were still short-term risks to the economy from the weakness of export markets and firms trimming output to offload excessive stocks.

But it said there had been few signs so far of de-stocking and the outlook for Britain's main continental markets was improving.

"As a result, although those risks remain, they now seem less serious, and with the passage of time they will, if not realised, disappear from the picture. It was precisely at this juncture that policy mis-

takes were made in the past".

The inflation report argued that domestic demand was set to pick up over the next two years. Consumer spending would be underpinned by rising real incomes and the windfall gains from building society mergers, while investment was also likely to rise.

Bank officials are concerned that the recent expansion in bank and building society deposits will — if sustained — lead to higher inflation over the next few years.

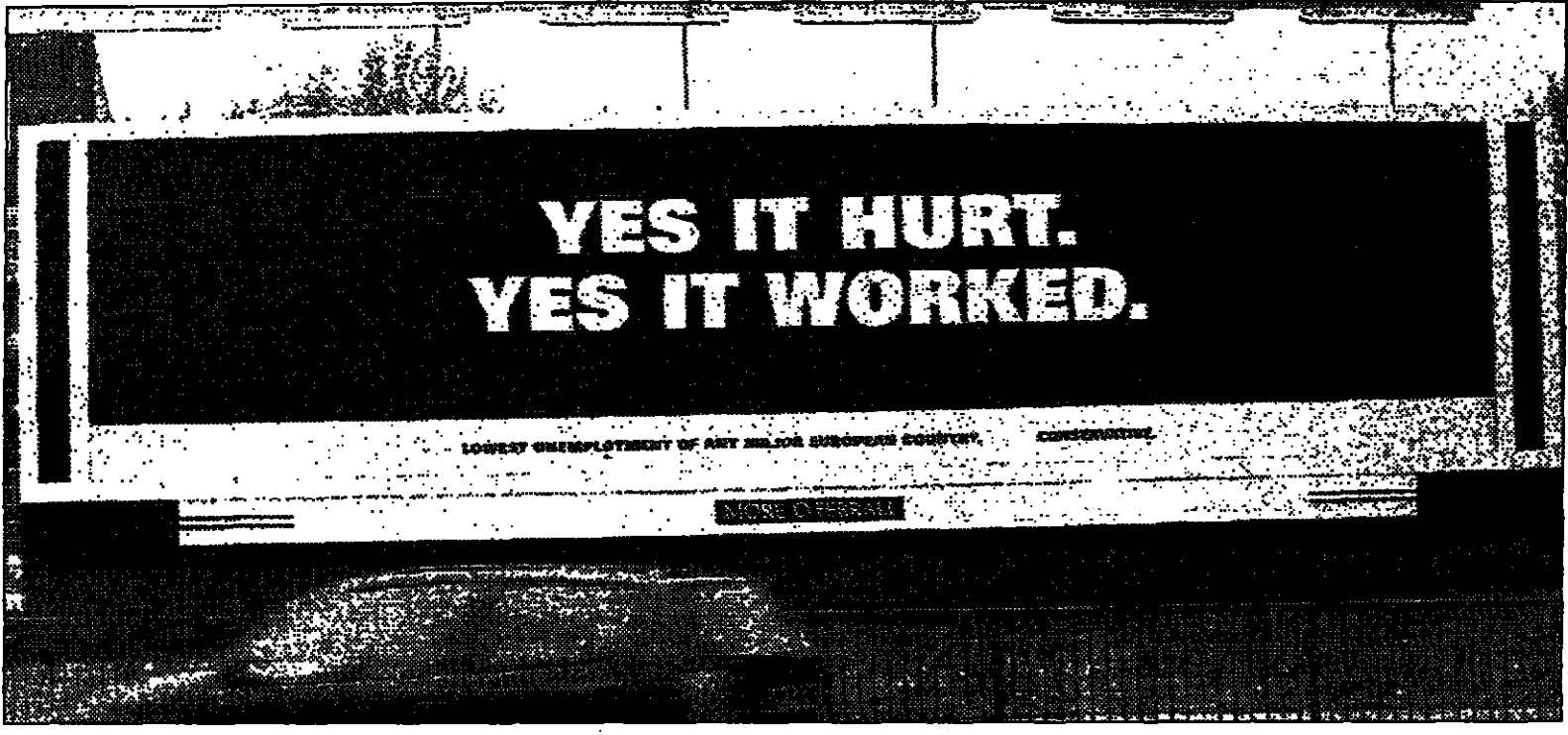
The Bank's fears about repeating the errors that stoked up the Lawson boom are shared by senior officials at the Treasury, who see similarities between the current

state of the economy and the growth "pause" in early 1986.

However, the City believes that the Government's political woes could tempt the Chancellor to cut rates for a fourth time since the Budget.

A year ago, the downturn in the economy vindicated the Chancellor's decision to overrule the advice of the Bank's governor, Eddie George. Since then, the Bank has avoided open conflict with Mr Clarke, but analysts said yesterday's message from Threadneedle Street was that the trough in base rates had now been reached.

See quotes 'to shrink', and Notebook, page 11.



A touch of humility or an arrogant own goal? The new Tory poster, which was devised by Maurice Saatchi, above right

Tories put the pain in election campaigning

Rebecca Smithers and Andrew Cuff

THE Conservative Party yesterday launched its pre-election advertising campaign with an admission that its economic policies have been unpopular and painful.

The nationwide poster campaign, costing between £500,000 and £750,000, features the high-risk slogan: "Yes it hurt. Yes it worked."

Labour's deputy leader, John Prescott, dubbed it a "futile gesture, while advertising experts labelled it arrogant and out of touch.

The campaign was devised by Maurice Saatchi, the advertising guru credited with winning four consecutive elections for the Tories, and public relations supremo Sir Tim Bell, former adviser to Margaret Thatcher.

After an acrimonious row last year with the agency they founded, Maurice and his brother Charles set up M & C Saatchi, and are now working with Conservative Central Office.

A spokeswoman for the party, which has an estimated £25 million election "war chest", said: "The basic message is that life is better under the Conserva-

tives. We are making it clear that the policies we had to follow hurt a little, but they were policies that worked. This is a touch of humility."

Smaller print on the poster claims 26 million people have had their income tax cut and that Britain has the lowest unemployment of any major European country.

Future posters will attack Labour, repeating the 1992 theme of a "double whammy" of more taxes and higher prices.

John Banks, chairman of the Banks Hoggins O'Shea advertising agency, said the Tories should concentrate on attacking Labour in the absence of a feelgood factor.

He said: "This slogan is like saying 'It is the age of the train'. You can say it as often as you like, but people don't believe it if the trains are late, dirty and expensive."

Trevor Beattie, creative director of TBWA and one of the masterminds behind Gossard's Wonderbra campaign, said: "I am absolutely staggered. It is so arrogant, a massive own goal."

Hugh Burkitt, of Burkitt Edwards Martin (BEM), said: "It sounds to me as if this has been written by the client. It is rather desperate."

Alfredo Marcantonio, vice-chairman of Abbott Mead Vickers BBDO, said: "I think it is a bit apologetic — it is rather like saying at least Mussolini got the trains to run on time."

Saatchi and Saatchi declined to comment on an excellent, but former creative director Tony Brignall said: "It is pretty damn clever. It implies it won't hurt any more — it is like going to the dentist, but now the tooth is out."



In other words

The Conservative Party. If it ain't fixed, don't break it.

The Conservative Party. So good, Tony Blair wants one.

The damage has been repaired and normal service will now resume. Please do not adjust your Government.

The Conservatives. Better the devil you know.

The Conservatives. We've started. Let us finish.

Slogans supplied by Burkitt Edwards Martin

Choicest pomp greets Chirac

Ian Black Diplomatic Editor

IT WAS the kiss that gave away the unpretentious excitement: the double-handed, fingertip-pressed-to-lips film star number Jacques Chirac launched at a gaggle of tricolour-waving children as the Rolls swept him on to Horse Guards.

Ramrod-stiff, an impresario enjoying his own show, France's president grinned at the ranks of Life Guards as a trumpeter sounded a royal salute, and alighted to greet his bossess and accentuate the cordiale in the old entente between their countries.

Monsieur Chirac stood tall to shake hands with the Queen, although seasoned protocol-watchers noted that the wife, Bernadette, gave a perceptible curtsy when the moment arrived.

It was pomp and ceremony at their British best: from the gleaming Irish Guards to the patient policemen shepherding over-excited tourists into the reviewing stands — half empty but still welcoming to

an Anglophile republican who so clearly relished the royal welcome, and who had arrived by Eurostar in London yesterday straight from the Gare du Nord.

The band's rendition of the Marseillaise left a fair bit to be desired, but the viewing pavilion was a marvel of blue, white and red canvas with Disneyland turrets and little pennants that would have looked fine on the eve of Agincourt.

Pre-visit hype on both sides of the Channel was justified by the splendour of the arrival scene. If it is a Europe des Patries London and Paris are supposed to have in common these days, then the British spared no effort to display their choicest patriotic wares.

Tricolours and union flags fluttered along the traffic-free Mall as the horse-drawn state landau, spearheaded by a Household Cavalry escort, set off for Buckingham Palace, raising little clouds of sawdust and a whiff of dung.

The president's first engagement was a private lunch for 50 — less formal than some of the more heavy-



Unpresidential glee: Mr Chirac retishing yesterday's welcome

weight sessions on the four-day schedule.

Historical echoes were never far away — from the army explaining that the Irish Guards and Welsh Guards on duty were the only two gaurds battalions not to fight at Waterloo, to the wreath laying at the tomb of

the unknown warrior in Westminster Abbey.

Afterwards there was another, more political pilgrimage to Carlton House Terrace to pay homage at the statue of Charles de Gaulle, who made an ideology out of defending France's national interest and famously said non to Britain's

application to join the Common Market.

And from there it was only a short mental leap for Mr Chirac to a call by Tony Blair: Labour's views on European monetary union and Maastricht were useful preparation before this morning's talks with John Major.

Official menu gives president food for thought

JACQUES CHIRAC, a man with simple tastes in food, may find some of the fare heavy going as he lurches from banquet to banquet during his four days in Britain, writes Ian Black.

Beef — de rigueur for visiting Europeans these days — was on the menu for yesterday's arrival lunch at Buckingham Palace.

Palace officials provided a menu to dispel rumours that the French president was being served Beef Wellington after being met by Princess Margaret at Waterloo. In fact, it was "Filet de Boeuf aux Nouilles Provençales".

Lunch began with Terrine de Trois Saumons (salmon terrine) while the beef was served with green beans, cauliflower and new potatoes.

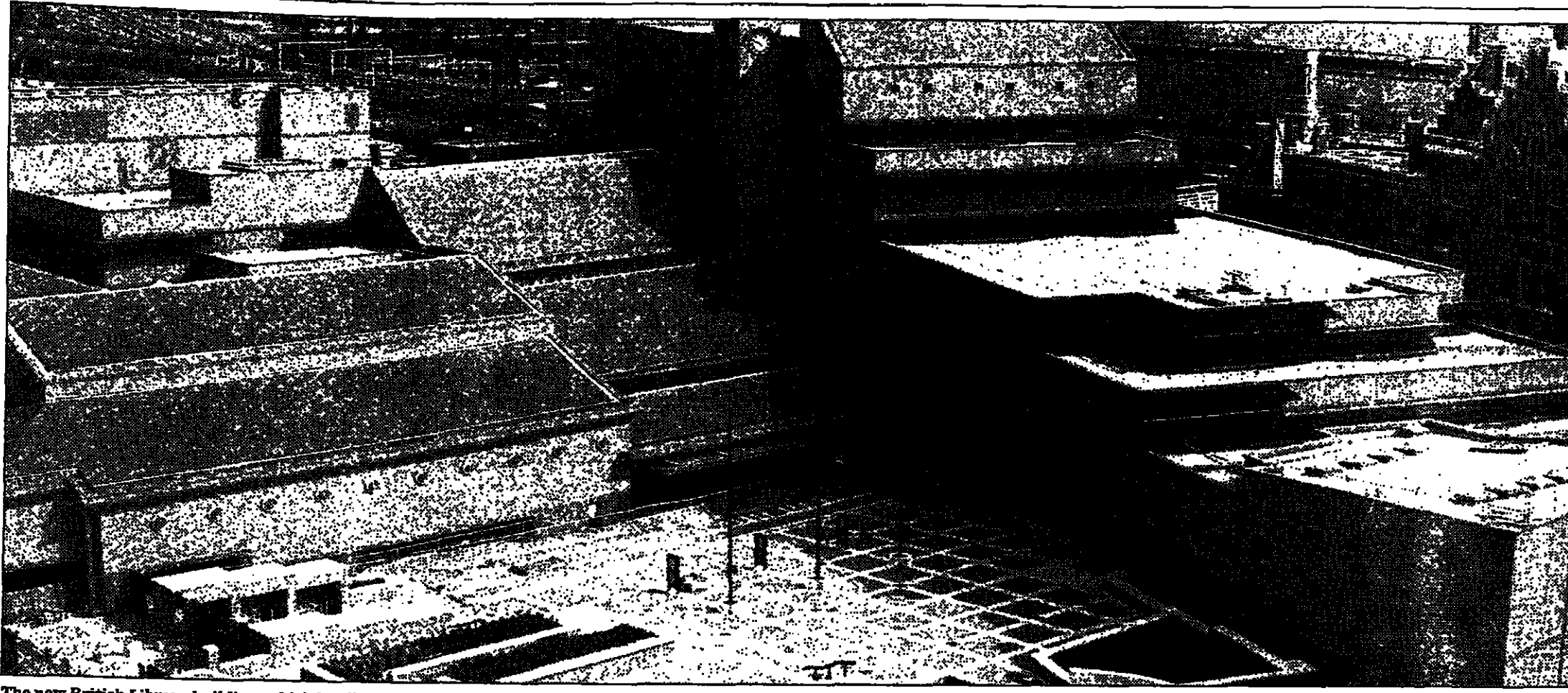
Last night, President Chirac was dining at Buckingham Palace on sole, lobster mousse and rack of lamb.

Tonight, he is John Major's guest at Hampton Court, and tomorrow plays host at the French ambassador's residence in Kensington.

All a bit trying for a man said to be happiest with snacks and a bottle of low-alcohol lager.

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Handwritten note: 10/11/2015



The new British Library building, which is still under construction and is now not due to be opened until October 1997

PHOTOGRAPH: ALAN REEVILL

Albert Hall wins lottery

Dan Glaister
Arts Correspondent

THE announcement yesterday of a grant of £40 million from the National Lottery to refurbish the Royal Albert Hall was marred by a row between the hall's management and the Department of National Heritage.

Patrick Deuchar, chief executive of the hall, attacked the department for leaking details of the grant to the press.

"It is a disgraceful situation and one not to be condoned," he said. "Somebody at the Department of National Heritage decided there were political points to be scored."

The redevelopment plan, which has been six and a half years in the pipeline, aims to increase the number of performances by 60 per year, open the hall to the public during the day, stage art exhibitions, create a traffic-free zone around the building, and refurbish the interior of the 125-year-old building in Kensington, west London. Work will begin immediately.

The £40 million grant is the largest joint funding appeal since the National Lottery came into existence.

As well as extra performances, there are plans for a national orchestra week, featuring British orchestras from outside London, world music festivals, and millennium celebrations.

In addition to the £40 million grant, the hall will invest £18 million of its own money in the refurbishment, the product of operating surpluses and an appeal.

"For the first time in its history the hall will be able to fully realise its potential," said Mr Deuchar. Previously, "there had never been enough money to enable the building to keep pace with technology."

Forseeing criticism at lottery money being awarded to another large venue in London, Mr Deuchar promised that there would be "no charitable appeal from this organisation at this stage. I believe it is the nation's village hall and it is right that it should get the nation's money."

Chunnel poses latest threat to British Library

Project is 10 years behind time and the problems keep coming

David Hencke
Westminster Correspondent

BRITAIN'S longest-running and most accident-prone project, the incomplete British Library, is set to collide with another unfinished dream, the Channel Tunnel high speed rail link, the National Audit Office reveals today.

The latest delayed opening date for the British Library — October 1997 — is to coincide with the date for the much postponed start of building the new Channel Tunnel rail link on land next door to the new building. This promises more disruption to the ill-fated British Library project.

Projected costs of the British Library scheme, first conceived over 40 years ago, have risen from £164 million to £268 million and its construction is 10 years behind schedule. The latest delay to completion, from this year to next, has put £46 million on the bill.

The damning report, to be examined by MPs on the Commons Public Accounts Committee next month, discloses

that error upon error has compounded the problems.

In 1994, this led Stephen Dorrell, the then Heritage Secretary, to consider cancelling the scheme. The report warns that even injection of £46 million extra cash is already fully committed, with no room for manoeuvre should anything else go wrong.

Practically everything in the building that could go wrong has gone wrong — with attempts to solve problems often leading to fresh ones.

The report lists difficulties with bookshelves, electric cabling, fire protection systems, floods, mechanical book handling systems, lighting, energy management, ductwork insulation and cleaning, electrical power, thermal stores, and even paint.

Prototype mobile bookshelves, for a start, threw books backwards and forwards and were jammed by gear failures. Once these problems were solved, it was discovered that the bookshelves were rusting and the paintwork had to be changed. Then the supplier, Bryozeeal,

had to dismantle the entire system and rebuild it.

Then 3,000 kilometres of electrical cabling installed by Balfour Beatty was found to be damaged and needed to be checked and partly replaced.

As a result, parts of the building could not be cabled without causing damage and circuit breakers had to be installed. To sort out the whole problem, which would have required a redesign of the cabling, would have cost £40 million. Instead £1.5 million was spent on circuit breakers.

A planned "dry" sprinkler fire protection system was found to be corroded and unworkable in storage areas "where there was little chance of extinguishing a fire before most of the storage compartment's contents were destroyed."

It was replaced with a "wet" system at a cost of about £50,000, plus a £1.4 million bill for new pumps and quicker response sprinkler heads.

The report says that although these faults delayed the scheme by two and half years.

Even when it is completed, the library will not be big enough, with the 351-seat capacity of the science and Oriental reading rooms expected to be full up on opening day.

The auditors blame poor or no management of the project. They point out that having two clients for the scheme, the Department of National Heritage and the British Library, had served to aggravate the time and cost over-runs.

Brian Lake, head of the British Library Regular Readers Group, yesterday said the plight was worse than exposed in the report.

"Work is not finished on the first phase as the report says, 24-hour working is still underway, internal doors are being replaced, main fuse boxes are being replaced, and drink dispensers which were fitted in 1991 and never used will have to be replaced."

He added: "The whole story is a catalogue of cock-ups and incompetence. The new building for the British Library was a project conceived with the best intentions and executed in a way which made those intentions unachievable."

"The future of the BL is one of cuts and more cuts and continuing financial crisis, declining morale and quality of staff, split-site working, and longer waits for books rather than shorter ones."

Progress in completing the New British Library. Report by the Comptroller and Auditor General, HMSO £10.75

A catalogue of disasters

- Book shelving**
£2.4 million contract for fixed, free-standing and electrically operated bookshelves.
Problems
• The shelves suffered from rust, paint damage
• Books fell off the mobile bookshelves
• The shelves' structure and drive mechanisms were faulty causing jamming
Sol?
• Finalised paint, changed but other manufacturers were not identified
• Shelves had to be dismantled and replaced completely
• Attention to timeliness and contractual wrapping
- Electrical cabling**
3,000 kilometres of low voltage cabling.
Problems
• Inspectors in 1992 revealed problems ranging from minor disconnection to complete exposure of the copper core
• Declared unsafe and not fit for their purpose in Autumn 1993
Sol?
• Massive disruption to thousands of employees
• Impossible to estimate cost
• Additional circuit-breakers installed
• 60% of the cabling has been inspected and any damage found repaired
• Top engineers to inspect/repair remaining cable
- Other problems**
• 6 floods
• 6 emergencies
• 6 faulty and stuck lifts
• 6 and so on for the...
• 6 and so on for the...
• 6 and so on for the...

Royal soap a non-event

Drama it certainly ain't. Ian Katz on the US television debut of Princess in Love

EVEN a viewer who has spent the last five years on Mars will quickly conclude that this is a marriage in deep trouble. The first time we meet the Prince and Princess of Wales, he is abandoning her during a Spanish holiday and she is distraught.

Diana: "Charles, you can't be leaving."
Charles: "What's that funny smell?"

Diana: "Tanning lotion — doesn't change the subject."
The scene tells you everything you need to know about Princess in Love, the quickie CBS film about Diana's affair with Major James Hewitt to be broadcast in the United States tonight. Charles is cast as a cold, fusty brute, Diana is vulnerable and vacuous — and the next two hours are going to take a very long time.

Its director, David Greene, does us the favour of confining the requisite "fairy-tale" footage to the credits. Based on the Anna Pasternak book, Princess in Love cuts straight to the chase. Literally.

Charles (Christopher Bowen) constantly calls in with excuses why he must stay overnight at Highgrove. On the rare occasions he does see his wife, he says things like: "I'll be off to my own room in a moment. I'll just leave these here for you to sign."
Hardly surprising, then, that Diana (Julie Cox) seeks



Christopher Villiers, who portrays Major James Hewitt in the CBS film, would "make a sofa look animated"

comfort in the arms of her dashing young riding instructor, Major James Hewitt (Christopher Villiers). Even so, her brazen flirtatiousness is a trifle unseemly. "You make it seem so easy," she purrs to the major after their first outing. "Are you this good at everything you do?"

In case we are not clear what Maj Hewitt gives her that her husband does not, we see the princess smiling as the major compliments her on her riding skills. The camera then cuts to Charles distributing similarly warm praise — to his foliage. "Plants need encouragement," he explains. "So do people," Diana retorts.

Viewers struggling to follow the plot may find the music helpful. Diana pines for Maj Hewitt to Dire Straits' So Far Away From Me. When she interrupts Charles dancing with Camilla Parker-Bowles, Frank Sinatra croons Strangers in the Night.

Ms Parker-Bowles, it turns out, is nothing like you would expect. Not at all cerebral or aristocratic, more of a bawdy, barmaid type. When Charles laments having married "a schoolgirl who would benefit from a good spanking", she groans lasciviously, and warts him: "Mussn't get too excited my pet... unless you want to stay the weekend."

Cutting between a Pan-orama-esque interview with the princess and scenes from her angst-ridden life, Princess in Love leaves you with the same feeling as a poor cover version of a much loved song.

It does not help that Mr Bowen bears a closer resemblance to Timothy Dalton than Prince Charles, or that Christopher Villiers would make a sofa look animated.

There are doubtless many morals that can be extracted from the collapse of the marriage, but just one that springs from Princess in Love. Reporters who instinctively refer to the real-life saga as a "made-for-television drama" should desist. It isn't.

Brown's plan for Treasury scorned by Prescott

continued from page one

ranges of responsibilities under a Blair-led Whitehall shake-up — recently surfaced in Peter Mandelson's book on New Labour, not a work Mr Brown is likely to keep at his elbow.

"The Treasury has well established and embedded ways of dealing with major economic and social issues. Even in the realm of public finances it has failed to act on every occasion in the best interests of maximising growth and investment," Mr Prescott said.

"Too often in the past, the dead hand of the Treasury has stifled initiative and innovation, in the public and private sector with a rigid inflexibility in the interpretation of Treasury rules."

Shadow ministers are committed to upgrading employment as a "Maastricht criterion" as Sweden is proposing. But Mr Meacher's speech put an Old Labour gloss on policy goals which are more cautiously expressed by Mr Blair and Mr Brown.

"Unless the real economy and employment objectives in particular are reflected in the operation of the EMU (Economic and Monetary Union), then there must be a real danger that it could act as a deflationary and divisive force in the EU."

"It could be argued that the existing monetary criteria for EMU are already adversely affecting employment in both public and private sector — because of their impact on public spending and on economic demand," he said.

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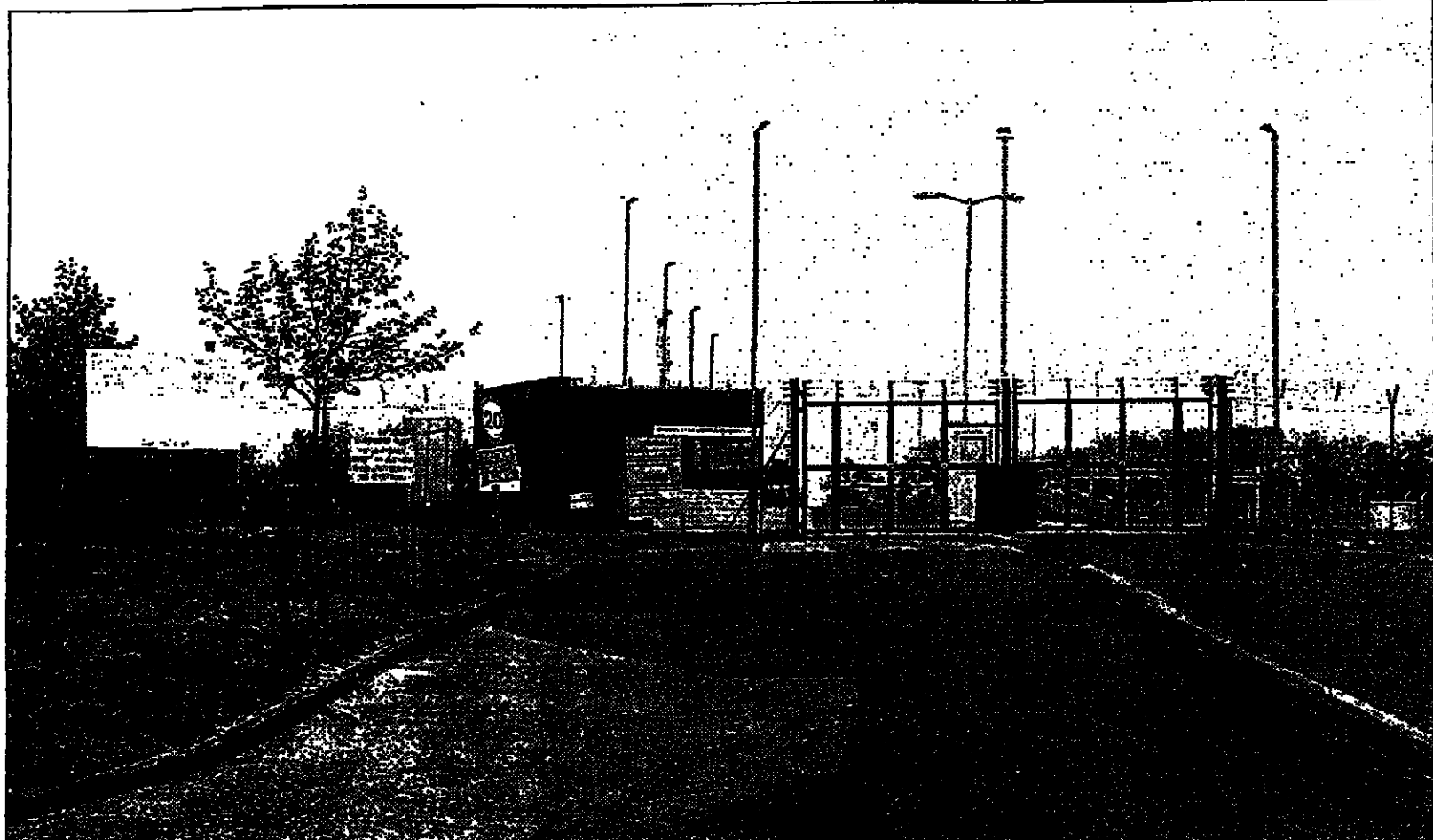
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AST COMPUTER

Not all psychotherapists are attachment theorists. Some might prefer to trace the conflicted Brown/Mandelson behaviour back to birth trauma, or inadequate self-actualisation, or repressed libidinal urges.

Catherine Bennett, page 3



Source of doubt... the Defence Research Agency's Fort Halstead forensic explosives laboratory near Sevenoaks in Kent

Tim Radford finds that a second-hand centrifuge machine government scientists used to test for traces of explosives as evidence in high profile trials could have been contaminated itself by incriminating chemicals since 1989



A scientist taking swab samples for centrifugal analysis

Laboratory accident revealed Semtex cases 'nightmare'

FOR more than six years, on around 500 occasions, government scientists used a machine to refine samples of evidence in terrorism cases to look for cyclotrimethylene trinitramine, or RDX — a chemical which indicates the handling of Semtex explosive.

Now at least a dozen cases may be in doubt after Home Office chiefs last night admitted that the instrument at the government's Forensic Explosives Laboratory may have been contaminated with RDX from the start.

The contamination might have been inside a rubber fitting in a machine which arched second hand, from another laboratory, and was apparently never checked for contamination.

Contamination is every laboratory's nightmare — and as instruments become more sensitive, the dangers of it occurring inadvertently rise.

Earlier this decade, for example, America's leading AIDS scientists were humiliated by the revelation that their discovery of the AIDS virus might only have been the rediscovery of a virus sent to them by the Pasteur Institute in Paris. Similarly, dinosaur experts who two years ago exulted in extracting dinosaur DNA from fossils now admit

Testing for Semtex

The nightmare at the Defence Research Agency's Fort Halstead laboratory in Kent was triggered by the discovery of 30 micrograms — 30 millionths of a gram — of RDX in a control sample. Thirty mg is not much (a

grain of sugar weighs around 500 micrograms), but it should not have been there at all.

The sample was from a routine test made in March to confirm, as expected, there was no contamination on the laboratory surfaces or equipment. If the laboratory technician had not gone ahead with the test after a test tube had broken and split the sample in the centrifuge, the discovery might never have been made.

When forensic scientists are called in, they look for microscopic evidence: since they cannot see it, they take swabs on cotton wool — from hands, clothing, car upholstery, paper wrapping and so on. The contents of the swab are then dissolved in alcohol. Since the evidence they seek will not be the only thing on the swab, they need to separate the material.

To do this they use a centrifuge which, with the solution inside it in a glass test tube, spins hundreds of times a second. The centrifugal force hurries any dirt to the bottom of the tube, and the rest of the solution can be examined by instruments which can detect tiny amounts of dissolved chemicals.

The 30 micrograms discovered in the centrifuge on March 14 came from an insignificant part of the machine: the rubber support on which the test tube holder balanced as it spun.

The test tube had broken in the holder, and its contents had then flowed on to the rubber.

The scientists are fairly sure that the rubber support was the source of the contamination. They also point out that in theory, where there were no spills or breakages, RDX could not have got directly from the rubber support to the sample being tested for evidence. But of course it could have travelled indirectly: a technician handling the sample would also touch the test tube holder — which had been resting on the contaminated rubber.

Mr Howard's answer in Parliament yesterday talked of "a small theoretical possibility" that case samples might have been contaminated.

But if the rubber support had been used 500 times since 1989, and in 1996 was still releasing detectable and potentially incriminating traces of RDX, then lawyers might be entitled to wonder how much RDX had been in the machine in the first place, when it arrived at the Fort Halstead laboratory in 1989.

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BRISTOL & WEST BUILDING SOCIETY

Man who questioned Six evidence

Contamination inquiry

Alan Travis on the sceptical scientist appointed to review the possibility of unsound tests in terror case convictions

THE MAN appointed to undertake the inquiry is Brian Caddy, who was the first independent forensic scientist publicly to question some of the evidence in the case of the Birmingham Six.

Professor Caddy also acted as a forensic adviser to the Maguire family during the inquiry by Sir John May into the convictions of the Guildford Four, and gave evidence to the Court of Appeal on behalf of the Birmingham Six.

He took an early interest in the arguments surrounding the conviction of the Birmingham Six, and appeared in a World In Action programme in 1985 when he questioned some of the forensic evidence put forward by Frank Skuse which was crucial to the original conviction of three of the men for the pub bombings.

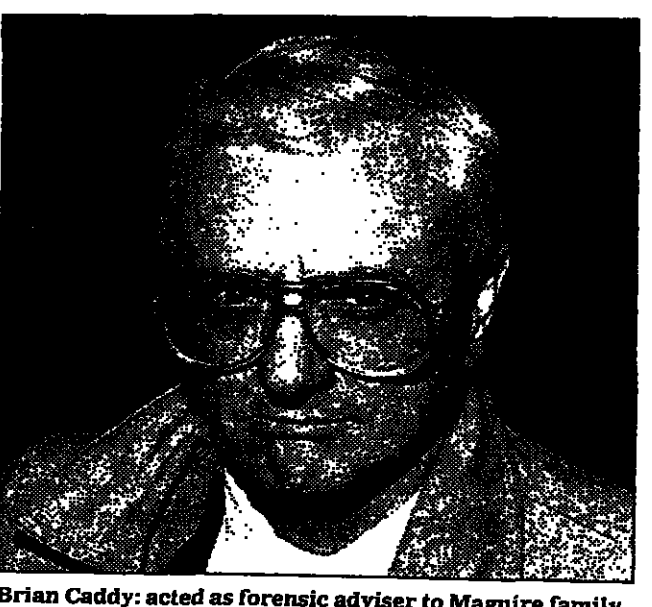
Prof Caddy works at Strathclyde university and has been asked by the Home Secretary to examine

all the paperwork in the cases in which Semtex traces were found by the Forensic Explosives Laboratory — and assess whether it was likely they had been contaminated.

Prof Caddy will also look at the likelihood that the contamination in the centrifuge had spread to other samples in the laboratory and affected more cases than the 12 so far identified by the Home Office.

Prof Caddy is the editor of Science and Justice, the journal of the Forensic Science Society, and has earned an international reputation representing the UK at meetings of Interpol.

He has published more than 80 articles and in recent years has developed a special interest in analysing the residue left by gunshots.



Brian Caddy: acted as forensic adviser to Maguire family

Vaccine drive urged

Lack of investment 'wastes thousands of lives and hundreds of millions of pounds'

Chris Millih
Medical Correspondent

ASCIENTIST prominent in the fight to eliminate smallpox warned yesterday that thousands of lives and hundreds of millions of pounds were being wasted every year because of a failure to invest sufficiently in vaccines against other diseases.

Donald Henderson, head of the World Health Organisation's campaign against smallpox, said that microbes had killed far more people than warfare, yet research into new vaccines was seen as a low spending priority.

Professor Henderson was speaking at the Royal Society in London in a lecture to mark the 200th anniversary of the world's first successful immunisation — by Edward Jenner on May 14, 1796, using cowpox against smallpox.

Prof Henderson said vaccines' contribution to improving human health far outweighed other advances, but this generally went unrecognised.

"Amongst the pantheon of medical procedures, a number are regularly cited as medical miracles: cardiac surgery, cancer chemotherapy, organ transplantation and the brilliant spectrum of pharmacological intervention for all manner of aches and pains.

"Seldom is vaccination accorded such respect and, yet, I believe it is safe to say that more lives are saved and more disabling diseases prevented each year by vaccines alone than by all these other medical interventions combined."

Prof Henderson said the total international investment in the smallpox vaccination programme was \$100 million (£66 million), while savings each year amounted to several thousand million dollars.

The aim was that one day a single dose multiple vaccine given by mouth at birth could protect against all the serious

Murdered woman warned against Far East holiday

ABRITISH woman raped and beaten to death in the Philippines had been warned by her family about the dangers of holidaying in the Far East.

Linda Vockins, aged 35, had agreed not to visit Thailand after her family said she would be in danger travelling there alone. Her naked body was found dumped in a ravine near the holiday cottage she was renting in the Philippines on Sunday.

Ms Vockins, of Burghfield Common, Berkshire, who had travelled extensively, had been alone when she was attacked.

Two weeks earlier she had been mugged in the capital, Manila, and only a few days before her death she was robbed of her handbag.

The former teacher had been making a last trip abroad before settling down to a new job as a pub manager in Reading, Berkshire.

She was made redundant earlier this year from a job as a customer relations manager at electrical giants Thorn EMI.

Her stepfather Frank Barnham, speaking from the family's home near Reading, said: "She has travelled around the world before. It is not the first time she has been on her own. She knew what she was doing.

"She was very sensible. She knew how to look after herself and others. People who know her will be shocked it could have happened to her.

"She had wanted to go to Thailand, but I managed to talk her out of that. I saw enough of Thailand when I was in the army. We thought that would be too dangerous and she would be safe in the Philippines."

The result of an autopsy was expected yesterday and the family said they would ask for the body to be returned to England.

Ms Vockins was expected to return from her 10 week trip on June 23.

A friend, John Doody, who used to live and work with Linda, said: "She was a very confident person with a very outgoing nature and she was very caring."

Edward Moran, a spokesman for the Philippines embassy in London, issued a warning yesterday that women who travelled alone in the country were vulnerable.

Handwritten signature: J.P. 10/1/96

Daughter tells of mother's illness and alleges Government 'failed in its duty of care and misled public over the safety of eating beef'

CJD victim's family seeks legal aid to sue ministers

Sarah Boseley

THE family of a 44-year-old woman who died of Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease is seeking legal aid to sue the Government, alleging that the public were misled by ministers and officials who told them eating beef was safe.

Iija Andrews, 23, from Banbury, Oxfordshire, is convinced that her mother, Dutch-born Fionnie Van Es, died as a result of eating beef infected with BSE. With her brothers, Tjark, 21, and Tjobbe, 14, and her father, Terry Andrews, she met the families of about 20 other CJD victims in Banbury yesterday.

Ms Andrews said of her mother: "She had always been healthy — one of those people who never seem to fall ill."

But after an attack of shingles, from which she recovered, she was having difficulty getting to sleep and was showing signs of depression.

"We thought she was over-



Fionnie Van Es: her health 'declined rapidly'

worked. Her GP prescribed Diazepam, but then she developed twitches in her right hand. The medication was stopped, but the jerking continued and her depression got worse.

Ms Van Es's health declined rapidly over three months. CJD was not diagnosed until about two weeks

before she died, in June 1984. "Towards the end, me and my brothers were feeding her, dressing her, bathing her and putting her to bed. We had to do everything for her. She knew she had CJD but she did not know then, thank God, that it had anything to do with mad cow disease.

"At no time was she mad. She always remembered who we were, but she lost control of her body, and all her dignity had gone."

Her mother ate beef. "Our diet was like anyone else's."

Her solicitor, David Harris, from Sale in Cheshire, said they had taken leading counsel's advice. If there were a proven link between BSE and the strain of CJD from which Ms Van Es died, then her family would be entitled to compensation, he believed.

There would have to be investigations to establish whether there was a link of which the Government was aware at the time it was advising the public that beef was safe to eat.

Mr Harris acknowledged that he would need disclosure

of government documents to fight the case. Speaking on BBC Radio 4, he denied that it was inappropriate to use legal aid to try to force an issue that the scientific community was still investigating.

"All I am saying is that there is a duty of care owed by the Government. It's all very well for the Government to contend that there is no proven link — there are suggestions, indeed, that have been put in the press and the media over a considerable period of time that there is a link."

The most that could be won in compensation was £7,500, but the action was worth taking not for financial gain but because of the wider emotional considerations.

"We are applying for legal aid alleging that there is a duty of care owed by the Government and that there may well have been a breach of that duty..."

"We also have to prove individual causation on my client's behalf. In other words, did her mother actually die from eating infected beef?"



Iija Andrews, who says mother ate BSE-infected beef, with her brothers, Tjobbe (left) and Tjark

Brussels may put off vote on beef ban

Michael White and Julia Wolf in Brussels

EUROPEAN Union veterinary officials may today postpone a decision to ease the beef ban rather than risk a damaging majority vote that could go either way, EU officials hinted last night.

Though British ministers believe they have a majority on the standing scientific and veterinary committees to endorse a proposal by the European Commission to ease the ban on British beef by-products used in food and medicine, Germany is hesitant to endorse such a move.

Coming on the eve of a two-day Commons debate on European farm policy in which the beef crisis will feature strongly, the hint of delay is certain to enrage Eurosceptics on both sides and raises the likelihood of some Tory MPs voting with Labour tomorrow night.

The Tory chairman, Brian Mawhinney, last night acknowledged the delicacy of the situation in an anti-federalist speech which he said party policy on Europe was kept together by "three anchors": unquestioned support for membership of the EU; determination to fight within it for the national interest; and a commitment to hold a referendum if Britain were to join a single currency — but not on the wider issue of membership, as Sir Jimmy Goldsmith wants. Earlier Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor, said Britain's national interests, political and economic, lay in being at the heart of Europe.

"It has been that way for centuries and will remain so. I do not believe that you can separate economics from politics," he told the German-British Chamber of Industry and Commerce in London.

Under the commission plan, easing the ban would be conditional on Britain applying tougher standards for treatment of beef by-products, notably tallow and gelatine. But opposition from Germany could make it difficult to get an accord today.

"We have our conditions, and I don't see them being fulfilled right now," the German health minister, Horst Seehofer, said following a meeting of EU health ministers where Stephen Dorrell, the Health Secretary, argued for a rational response. Privately, British ministers accuse Bonn of a "funk", refusing to confront German public opinion.

If the Germans find allies among the scientists, who take their orders from their national governments, such wavering states as Spain and the Netherlands may help block the decision under the qualified majority rules — though it could be overturned by farm ministers when they meet next week.

British beef consumption is back to 95 per cent, while sales in Germany are 50 per cent. France, where sales are scarcely better, is supporting Britain's case that measures have been taken to cull BSE-prone older dairy cattle, leaving a minimal scientific risk. With President Chirac on a state visit to Britain — and eating beef — Whitehall believes it can count on Paris.

'Victim' Thornton was mostly drunk

Vivek Chaudhary

THE son of Malcolm Thornton admitted yesterday that his father was hardly ever sober, and that the woman accused of killing him was trying to help him stop drinking.

Martin Thornton, aged 27, was giving evidence at the retrial of Sara Thornton, aged 41, who denies murdering her husband at their home in Atherston, Warwickshire, in June 1988.

Martin Thornton, Mr Thornton's son by his first marriage, told the jury at Oxford crown court that he went to stay with him four weeks beforehand. Under cross examination from Michael Mansfield, QC, representing Sara Thornton, Mr Thornton said: "It seemed he was hardly ever sober."

Sara Thornton was not at the house to begin with, said the son, because she had gone away after alleging his father assaulted her. Mr Thornton senior, aged 44 at his death and a former police inspector, was due in court on June 21 over the alleged assault.

Mr Thornton agreed his father was "drunk most of the time". On the Sunday before the killing, he heard his father say to Louise, Sara's daughter, "I'll break your fucking legs". Later that day Sara pointed a knife at him saying: "If you go near my daughter I'll kill you." He told the court: "I disarmed her. It was a threat rather than any-

thing more serious." Mr Thornton described the night his father died. He had gone for a drink with Sara; in the pub she appeared in a good mood and was talking about divorcing her husband.

When he got back, his father was asleep on the living room sofa, and he went to bed. He heard Sara return. Mr Thornton said: "The next thing I heard was the cutlery drawer in the kitchen."

"I heard my father scream. As I got half way down the stairs Sara was at the bottom. She just said: 'Martin, I have killed your father.'"

Mr Thornton denied claims by Mr Mansfield he may have "glossed over" certain events because he did not want to remember his father as an alcoholic. He admitted Sara "cared very much for my father", and had called Alcoholics Anonymous to help.

He also admitted knowing she planned to feed her husband chicken spiked with Moga-don tablets, so that he would go to hospital and be treated for his drink problem.

Earlier, the court heard from Tracey Crookston, a former lodger: "Something unusual" happened on her first day there, when Sara Thornton attacked her husband for coming home drunk and he retaliated. "I never saw Malcolm strike Sara back, apart from that first occasion." She described the defendant as "aggressive — sometimes when she had been drinking, or even when sober." The case continues.

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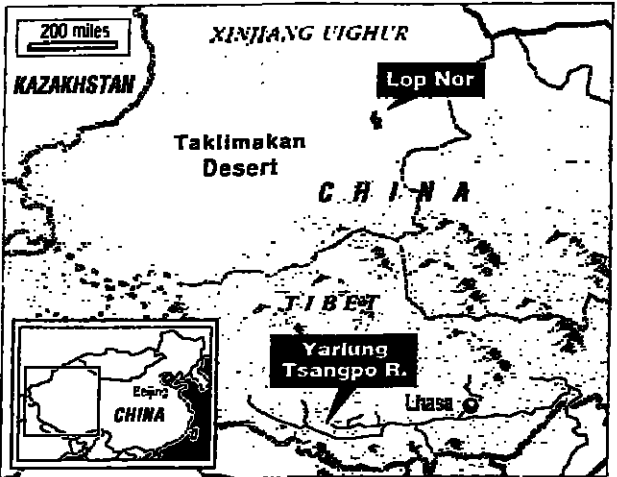
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Nuclear blasts to irrigate the desert

China claims it has big plans for 'peaceful' atomic explosions, writes David Fairhall



CHINA has come up with an astonishing scheme to irrigate a desert using nuclear explosives, which it claims justifies its obdurate refusal to support the ban on all underground nuclear tests now being sought by the other nuclear powers.

As delegates gathered in Geneva this week for a final effort to draft a comprehensive test ban treaty (CTBT), the Chinese representative, Sha Zukang, insisted that Beijing was prepared to be "flexible" on the issue of peaceful nuclear explosions. But she made it clear that China still sees a need for such "peaceful blasts", and other delegations have apparently been briefed on an audacious plan to divert water from the mountains of Tibet.

The scheme would involve creating a 500-mile underground canal to carry water from the Yartung Tsangpo river to the Taklimakan desert in the remote north-western region of Xinjiang —

which coincidentally contains the Lop Nor site where China still tests nuclear weapons.

An outline of the plan — whose implausibility is compounded by a confusing reference to the canal running from west to east when it would seem to run northwards — was contained in a report from Beijing monitored by the BBC on April 20.

It was apparently proposed to the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference by the physicist He Zuoxiu, who helped develop China's nuclear bomb, and Gong Yuzhi, vice-president of the central

party school. The purpose would be to grow forests in the Taklimakan desert. Radioactive contamination would not be a problem, it was argued, because the nuclear explosions would be confined to barren areas.

The Chinese authorities may have calculated that the idea of making the desert bloom would appeal to environmental pressure groups

like Greenpeace who protest at their nuclear programme. In fact, both the environmentalists and delegates at the United Nations-sponsored test ban conference are more likely to be alarmed at the

prospect of vast forests absorbing water contaminated by the long-lived plutonium and caesium by-products of an atomic explosion.

The aim of the resumed Geneva conference, which Sha Zukang says now has Beijing's full support, is to draft by June 28 a comprehensive test ban treaty that can be opened for signature at the UN general assembly in September.

The other declared nuclear weapons states — the United States, Russia, Britain and France — have already agreed that all tests, however small, should be banned, underground as well as in the atmosphere, and have stopped testing weapons.

China is alone in still calling for an exception to be made for peaceful underground explosions which might be used in irrigation, oil exploration or "scientific research" — a term others fear would open a vast loophole for covert weapons development.

"We don't want to see complete denial to developing economies," the Chinese representative said on Monday, arguing that the explosions could be monitored by on-site inspections. The Chinese are meanwhile

expected to carry out two more weapons tests in the next few weeks, and another two in September or October. Beijing says it needs to catch up with the much more extensive American and Russian programmes.

The protest ship Greenpeace, which was damaged while leading the campaign against the recent French tests in the Pacific, is scheduled to sail from Auckland for Shanghai today to support the case for a comprehensive ban and protest against the continuing Chinese test programme.

Asked for her reaction, Sha Zukang said she would discourage the Greenpeace venture. "It is a waste of money and energy," she said. "We are in favour of the objectives of Greenpeace."

Kohl tries to keep EMU on track

John Palmer in Brussels

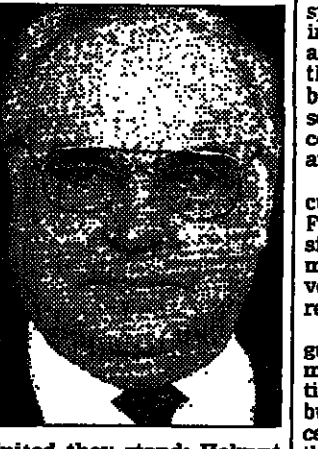
GERMANY'S chancellor descends on Brussels today to try to maintain resolve on monetary union as the European Commission publishes economic growth forecasts that will throw fresh doubt on whether France and Germany can meet the targets for a single currency.

Helmut Kohl and the president of the European Commission, Jacques Santer, plan to make an unusual joint declaration underlining their determination to meet the 1999 deadline for monetary union set out by the Maastricht treaty.

Although the commission was keeping the details of its economic forecasts for 1996 and 1997 under close wraps last night, they are sure to reflect the sharper than expected slowdown in almost all the European Union economies during the past 12 months.

The average EU growth rate this year may fall to 1.5 or 1.6 per cent — well down on earlier forecasts. The figures for next year will determine which countries join the single currency bloc.

The commission is likely to publish a range of predictions for the performance of EU countries in meeting the key Maastricht treaty single currency criteria. These include a target rate of less than 3 per cent for national budget deficits — well below the present deficits in almost all EU countries.



United they stand: Helmut Kohl, above and European Commission president Jacques Santer



Most attention will focus on the forecasts for France and Germany, the anchors of the planned single currency. Before taking into account the latest austerity measures announced in Paris and Bonn, both countries may end up with deficits nearer 4 per cent than the EMU requirement of 3 per cent.

At a special meeting today with all 21 members of the commission, Mr Kohl will express confidence that measures to cut spending announced by Bonn last month will help bring down the budget deficit.

He believes the proposed stability pact which will bind countries joining monetary union will count for more in any final decision about the single currency than whether a country is slightly above or below the target next year.

"There is no doubt that the slowdown in growth has been more severe than anyone expected and this makes it even more difficult to cut unemployment and thereby bring down excessive budget deficits," a senior commission official said yesterday.

"Remember that although the Maastricht treaty criteria for a single currency are essential, they will have to be weighed against other factors when EU heads of government decide — early in 1998 — which countries are to move to the final phase of monetary union in January 1999."

The financial markets already appear to have discounted some slippage by key EU countries in meeting the single currency conditions. In spite of this there is a growing conviction on European and world money markets that monetary union will begin in 1999 with perhaps seven or eight of the 15 EU countries initially taking part and others following later.

Most experts on the single currency believe the fact that France and Germany face similar economic problems makes talk of economic convergence and a single currency more credible, not less.

When Yves Thibault de Silguy, the single currency commissioner, presents the sensitive forecasts for growth and budget deficits today, he is certain to point to evidence that the growth slowdown is turning to recovery.

"The reports reaching us from both the private sector and governments in the member states [are] that the economic upturn will accelerate and could prove faster next year than we thought even quite recently," a commission official said.

The commission is worried that the recovery, however strong, may not generate as many jobs as it was originally hoped. For that reason Mr Santer is urging EU governments, trade unions and employers to sign up for an employment conference later this year to pool forces to find work for the 18 million jobless people in the EU.

UK collision course, page 11



Storm victims... An elderly Bangladeshi man clutches his wife on a pedal rickshaw as the couple, injured in Monday's tornado, make their way to a health clinic near the village of Mantala yesterday. At least 300 people were killed in the storm, which battered large areas 100 miles north of Dhaka. PHOTOGRAPH: RAFIGUR RAHMAN

French TV boss carpeted for 'chat-show image'

Paul Webster in Paris

POISONED by commercials and cheapened by the chase for ratings, the French state television service is at the centre of a row which threatens the future of its chairman, Jean-Pierre Elkabbach.

Yesterday Mr Elkabbach, a veteran broadcaster appointed by the Gaullist-led government in 1993, was questioned by a senate commission and the CSA, the higher audiovisual council, which controls broadcasting appointments and abuses, about what was of-

ficially described as "irresponsible management". The previous day he met staff at France 2 and France 3, the state channels which compete with the independent TF1. The employees, who recently went on strike for 10 days to win a £200 bonus, angrily demanded an explanation for the expenditure of more than £125 million on independent production companies run by six leading entertainers and chat show hosts.

A scandal has been inevitable since Alain Griotteray, a rightwing MP on the national assembly finance committee, uncovered "inexplicable errors of management" in state television.

Behind the accusation lies a debate on policy changes which have forced France 2 to seek 45 per cent of its finance from commercials. Advertising has doubled in four years to an annual 540 hours, but France 2 has been attacked for neglecting documentaries and other serious programmes to promote variety and chat shows to eat into TF1's audience.

After a private meeting with Mr Elkabbach, journalists said that even news bulletins were based on the audience-attracting themes

developed by TF1. Although France 2, with average ratings of nearly 25 per cent, has steadily reduced TF1's audience share to 37 per cent, the cost in quality and cash has been exorbitant, Mr Griotteray said.

"This disaster is not bad luck," he said. "Contracts are negotiated by the chairman and his praetorian guard, two former associates of the Italian Berlusconi group, and are drawn up in secrecy in a private Paris accountant's office."

Mr Elkabbach signed contracts with an independent producer, Jean-Luc Delarue, for about £50 million

over three years, and even advanced the money to set up his company. The firm has since announced a profit of more than 20 per cent.

Mr Elkabbach says he had to pay high fees to compete with TF1, though the latter's payments to its variety and chat show hosts cost hardly a third of Mr Elkabbach's contracts. The chairman is also being asked to explain why his programming policy resulted, in several cases, in advertising revenue falling well below the cost of the shows.

Some of the biggest audiences have been attracted

by documentaries, but they have received only a tenth of the money spent on variety. News has also suffered. Journalists pointed out that the station was paying about £600 a minute for overseas news reporting, about a third of the cost of a Paris-produced chat show whose guests appeared for nothing.

France 3, which gets a bigger share of the £27 licence fee and needs to raise only a quarter of its revenue from advertising, has not been under the same pressure to lower standards and its audience share has risen from 11 per cent to 18 per cent.

Supreme court rejects 'unfair to blacks' defence in crack cocaine appeals

Christopher Reed in Los Angeles

THE United States supreme court has rejected the argument that blacks are unfairly prosecuted for crack cocaine offences, ruling that criminal activities may have a racial bias.

By eight to one, the judges overturned two rulings which allowed defendants to present figures showing blacks are more often charged with particular crimes.

Instead, a defence of racial bias must now show that

other races receive more lenient treatment. Civil rights leaders, including the Rev Jesse Jackson, have attacked drug laws which they say discriminate racially. Sale and possession of crack attract tougher penalties than similar offences involving cocaine. As a result, far more blacks are in prison on drug offences than whites, although the numbers of offenders are much closer.

Chief Justice William Rehnquist disputed a Los Angeles judge's presumption that "people of all races commit all types of crime". On the

contrary, he said, figures showed that ethnic groups often dominated particular crimes. While blacks accounted for 90 per cent of federal crack convictions in 1994, whites accounted for 93 per cent of LSD drug convictions.

He said 91 per cent of those convicted of pornography and prostitution were white, but added: "Large-scale interstate trafficking networks controlled by Jamaicans, Haitians and American black street gangs dominate the manufacture and distribution of crack cocaine."

Although the economic argument recognises that blacks more often use crack, because it is cheaper than powdered cocaine, the preferred drugs of poor whites are the products of illicit rural "meth factories".

Nora Manella, a federal attorney in Los Angeles, welcomed the ruling. "It effectively puts to rest the simplistic view that the predominance of one race suggests a racist prosecution," she said. "This is no more true than saying the numbers of old balding white males in financial fraud cases suggests selective prosecution."

Indonesian army begins operation in Irian Jaya to free Western hostages held by separatists

John Aglionby in Jakarta

THE Indonesian army said yesterday that it had launched an operation to free the 11 people, including four Britons, held hostage by separatist guerrillas in the remote province of Irian Jaya since January 8.

Lieutenant-General Suyono, the army's chief of general affairs, said the operation began as soon as the army took responsibility for the crisis from the International Committee of the Red Cross last Thursday.

He said the efforts of the ICRC and local church leaders had been neither satisfactory nor convincing. Indonesia's special forces stormed the village of Geselema, in the Jayawijaya regency 2,500 miles east of Jakarta, less than four hours after the Free Papua Movement (OPM) and the ICRC broke off efforts to secure the release of the hostages. The army found only fresh footprints.

"Special forces teams are now in pursuit of the GPK," Gen Suyono said, using the government's acronym for all separatist organisations in Indonesia. The government has refused to negotiate with the rebels. Sources say the rebels number about 20 and are armed with guns. Their leaders, Kelly Kwalik and Daniel Kygoya, are divided: Mr Kygoya wants to free the captives but has been overruled by Mr Kwalik, who is demanding independence for Irian Jaya.

Irian Jaya, formerly the Dutch colony of West Papua, was ceded to Indonesia in United Nations-sponsored deal in 1963.

Charles Gray, deputy head of mission at the British embassy in Jakarta, said: "We are in extremely close touch with the Indonesians over their efforts to secure the release of the hostages." He refused to speculate how long it might take to resolve the crisis or say whether there were still any British security personnel in Irian Jaya.

The British defence attaché and two Scotland Yard hostage experts have been in the province liaising with the Indonesians.

The four Britons are Daniel Start, aged 21, William Oates,

22, Annette van der Kolk, 21, and Anna McIvor, 20. They were on a Cambridge University expedition to the Lorentz nature reserve when they were seized with 22 others, including two Dutch and a German. The German and 14 Indonesians have been released.

Martha Klein, a Dutch captive, is seven months pregnant. Sources close to the rescue said last week that she and the other hostages were in "as good in health as can be expected". The hunt for the kidnappers is hampered by the fact Irian Jaya has some of the world's most rugged terrain.

The lucky ones among us, Kazuo Ishiguro says, begin our lives cradled in deception. It is what every good parent offers their child — freedom to believe that the world is a stable, safe and morally ordered place — and offers it knowing it to be a lie.

Susie Mackenzie, G2 page 12

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الجمعة 15 مايو 1996

The Guardian Wednesday May 15 1996

For nine days, almost 4,000 people fleeing the militia war in Liberia were adrift at sea on dilapidated ships, in search of sanctuary

Their plight highlights the growing barriers encountered by those trying to escape zones of conflict around the world

Aid agencies fear mass sea exodus

Maggie O'Kane

INTERNATIONAL aid agencies are preparing for a mass exodus of desperate Liberians and other west African nationals living in Liberia, after thousands of refugees, fleeing by sea to escape the militia war, were allowed temporary refuge in neighbouring states yesterday.

Two cargo ships were finally allowed to land: the Bulk Challenge, with about 3,000 on board, docked in Ghana; and the smaller Victory Reefer, with 900 on board, in Sierra Leone.

Medics said those disembarking were delirious from sunstroke, dehydrated and weakened by outbreaks of malaria and measles. The Liberians, including hundreds of children had opted for the sun-baked steel decks of the ships — which had virtually no water — rather than risk staying in Liberia.

A Médecins Sans Frontières official said: "There could be a mass exodus. That is what all the agencies are preparing for. We don't know if the news that this first exodus has been a half success will send a signal to the people left behind that it's worth trying to get out."

Ghana and Sierra Leone allowed the ships to dock after days of negotiations. International pressure and promises of foreign funds finally led to both governments agreeing to allow the desperate passengers, who had rioted on one ship, to land.

Médecins Sans Frontières reported three deaths on the Bulk Challenge. Three of the agency's doctors who managed to board the ship have treated hundreds for malaria, measles and diarrhoea. The single crew toilet was broken and the passengers were forced to defecate on deck.

"These are not passenger ships," said Anne-Marie Huby of Médecins Sans Frontières. "They have few facilities for human beings. In the beginning people tried to stay out of the sun, but they had to scramble out on to the decks. People are delirious from sunstroke and as well as

the three deaths there have been numbers of pregnant women who need treatment for dehydration."

Fears that this could be the beginning of a bigger flight by Liberians were heightened when witnesses in the capital, Monrovia, reported thousands of people massing at the harbour yesterday to try to board another cargo ship.

The harbour was cordoned off, but it was unclear whether people would be held back permanently.

Anne Laniel, the deputy co-ordinator of Médecins Sans Frontières in Ivory Coast, who is in radio contact with agency's doctors treating the refugees, said one of the biggest problems for the medics was that desperate people had been trying to drink sea water on the ship.

"Things got even more complicated because that caused more sickness, vomiting and dehydration," she said.

Last night at the Ghanaian port of Takoradi there was no sign of previous days' rioting for food and scramble for water. People are so exhausted that it's all happening very very quietly," said Médecins Sans Frontières's French office in Ivory Coast's

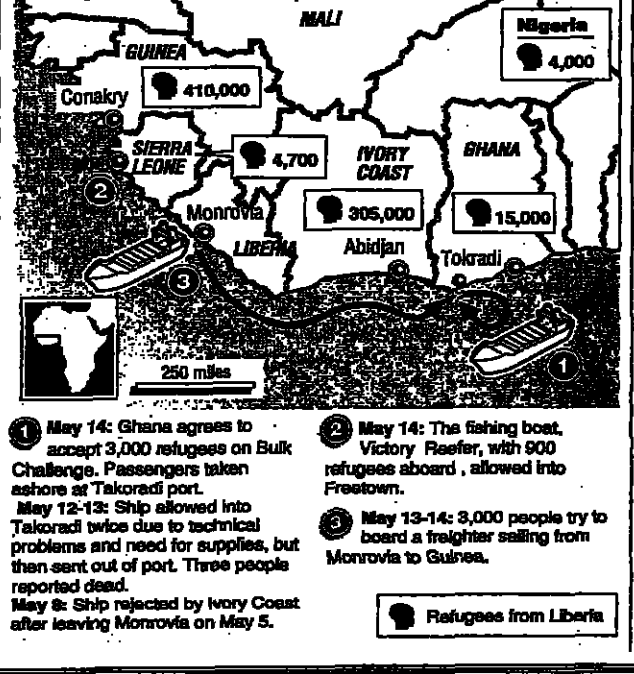
capital Abidjan. "All the people have disembarked and are being screened by the Ghanaians now. They were scattered around various camps."

Victory Reefer, the fishing boat allowed to dock in Freetown, capital of Sierra Leone, had been at sea for seven days with 600 adults and 300 children on board. Most of them were originally from Sierra Leone, but living in Liberia.

It was less crowded, but a Médecins Sans Frontières memo to its London office reported that "everything is a mess, the people are desperate."

For four days, aid agencies supplied water to the refugees while military and police boarded and initially ordered the ship's captain to take the ship back out to sea from Freetown.

"It became clear that the commander would not sail. People started fighting for every food item that came on to the ship and we also provided oral rehydration. Two sick people were taken off the ship. On Sunday we treated 20 people for malaria and a total of 50 people for fever and measles. On Monday we treated 100 people," the memo said.



World news in brief

De Klerk's party quits in provinces

SOUTH AFRICA'S opposition National Party said yesterday it would leave eight of the country's nine provincial cabinets, retaining only the Western Cape administration, where it has a majority.

"We are not leaving out of anger. We are leaving out of principle," said F. W. de Klerk, the party leader. "It remains the NP's firm position that we need, centrally and in each province, a consensus-seeking mechanism."

The party announced last week that it was withdrawing from President Mandela's unity government because the new constitution did not entrench consensus government. The government had been due to last until 1999.

Mr De Klerk said the party would stay in the Western Cape government and consider rejoining the unity if the province's draft constitution, which made provision for a consensus-seeking mechanism, was ratified. — Reuter.

Moscow confirms British 'spies' will have to go

RUSSIA'S foreign minister said yesterday that Moscow stood by its decision to expel the British diplomats it accuses of operating a spy ring in Russia. It decided to say when the envoys would leave.

"The decisions taken remain in force and we are implementing them through diplomatic channels," Grigory Karagin, a ministry spokesman, said.

Russia's Federal Security Service ordered nine British diplomats to leave a week ago. Mr Karagin said he believed no official figures of those to be expelled had been released.

Apparently keen to avoid harming Russian-British relations, he played down the incident. "The situation should not be dramatised... It is a typical action by special services ensuring the security of their country and people."

He added: "We want to underline our desire that the incident should not influence successfully developing Russian-British relations." — Reuter.

Panama starts amnesty row

Amnesty International and other human rights groups have condemned a plan by Panama's ruling Democratic Revolutionary Party to pardon nearly 1,000 of the worst human rights offenders during the dictatorship of General Manuel Antonio Noriega.

The measure is part of an effort by the party, which Gen Noriega once controlled, to cleanse the records of some of its most prominent supporters. — New York Times.

Recorder found

United States federal safety experts dried out a muddy flight recorder and began analysing the data yesterday after a diver stumbled on it in the wreckage of Saturday's ValuJet crash in the Florida Everglades which killed all 109 on board. — Reuter.

UN expert quits

Yozo Yokota, the United Nations human rights expert investigating violations in Burma, has quit because of constant battle for funds for his work, a UN spokesman said yesterday. — AP.

Ararat visit

Yasser Arafat, the Palestinian leader, is to visit London on June 3-4 for meetings with John Major and other political leaders. It was announced in London yesterday.

REFUGEE LIMBO 7

Africa hardens heart on asylum

Owen Bennett Jones in Geneva

REFUGEES fleeing conflicts around the world are having increased difficulty in finding asylum, according to officials of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

"The concept of asylum has been coming under increasing strain in recent years, both in the developed and the developing world," said Rupert Colville of the UNHCR.

The 3,000 people fleeing Liberia on the Bulk Challenge were allowed into Ghana yesterday only after Accra received guarantees that the international community would provide money for their care. Before that, the Liberians and others on board had been turned away by the Ivory Coast, which has traditionally been tolerant towards refugees.

Elsewhere in Africa, barriers are going up. Since the flight of hundreds of thousands of Rwandans during the 1994 massacres, Tanzania — which for the past 20 years has taken in refugees from Burundi, Uganda and Mozambique, has become more resistant, its citizens complaining of increased robbery and environmental damage because of the refugees.

Fernando Del Mundo, an Africa specialist at the UN, said the continent had a reputation for being the most welcoming in the world towards refugees.

"In the last year the asylum regime throughout Africa has suffered great setbacks for the first time."

A similar hardening of attitudes has been apparent in Europe. From the first days of the conflict in former Yugoslavia west European countries imposed strict visa regimes for Bosnians. Most who escaped their country denied formal refugee status but given "temporary protection", without employment or social benefits rights.

Some European states, such as France, have devised other ways of restricting asylum-seekers. Paris now says it will only offer asylum to those fleeing persecution by a government. Algerian journalists, hundreds of whom have already been killed by Islamist extremists, have been denied asylum.

But while they are reluctant to let refugees in, Western capitals spend nearly £10 billion a year to ensure that they are looked after in camps close to their homes. The main concern seems to be to ensure that they are kept off the television screens and away from western Europe itself.



Liberian refugees crowd the decks of the cargo ship Bulk Challenge as it sailed from the capital Monrovia on Sunday with 3,000 refugees. The desperate people preferred their chances on the ill-equipped ship, which had almost no water, than risk militia violence at home. PHOTOGRAPH CHAD MATAR

Tough German refugee laws upheld

Ian Traynor in Bonn

GERMANY'S highest court yesterday upheld tougher asylum laws aimed at deterring neo-Nazi violence and curbing the huge numbers of foreigners seeking shelter here. But it ordered the government to relax some elements of the controversial 1993 law.

The constitutional court, replying to five test cases brought by failed asylum-seekers who fear being persecuted if they are sent home, ruled that the law introduced by Chancellor Helmut Kohl's government was not unconstitutional.

The law ended Germany's open-door policy for asylum-seekers — a guarantee written into its post-war constitution as atonement for Nazi racial persecution. The policy attracted 438,000 would-be immigrants a year.

Although Germany remains by far the biggest absorber of asylum-seekers in western Europe, the law introduced a number of obstacles which have resulted in a huge drop in the numbers applying for refuge.

Last year there were fewer than a third of the asylum applications made in 1993. There has also been a sharp fall in the anti-foreigner violence which surged after reunification in 1990.

Under the old laws, only about 4 per cent of asylum applications were granted, but the cost of putting up refugees during lengthy appeals created a huge welfare burden.

Widespread resentment, stoked by anti-foreigner parties, contributed to a wave of racist and neo-Nazi violence which culminated in the murder of five Turks in Solingen days after the new law was passed.

The constitutional court ruling came as a relief to the government. Chancellor Kohl said he was "very satisfied" and the opposition Social Democrats said the verdict was "balanced".

Refugee agencies were critical. Judith Kumin, the representative in Bonn of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, said the ruling would have "a serious and extensive impact on international refugee protection, since Germany is the most important asylum country in Europe."

"The UNHCR is disappointed," she said.

The most contentious part of the law is the provision for deporting asylum-seekers to "safe" third countries — meaning a non-native country or countries the asylum-seeker has passed through en route to Germany.

The court ruled that such deportations were permissible, but ordered the government to prevent abuse of this provision to avoid "chain deportations".

"The ruling on third countries is the most restrictive in western Europe," a spokesman for Amnesty International said.

Ms Kumin said the court had ignored pleas for asylum-seekers to be allowed to contest on a case-by-case basis the alleged safety of third countries.

"The asylum-seeker, deported from Germany into so-called safe third countries, often has problems there gaining access to a refugee status procedure."

The court ruled that asylum-seekers arriving by air may stay for seven days and be guaranteed access to legal advice. At present, they can be deported to third countries from airport detention centres within three days.

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Vietnamese flown home

AP in Hong Kong

THE Hong Kong government flew home 119 Vietnamese asylum-seekers yesterday, stepping up its deportation of boat people.

The 76 adults and 43 children were the first to go under an accelerated programme to send home 600 Vietnamese in the next two weeks. Their deportation was the first since Friday's mass breakout by up to 120 inmates of the Whitehead detention centre, 91 of whom have been recaptured.

Nearly 1,000 police and prison officers searched Whitehead yesterday and arrested 22 adults and 13 juveniles allegedly involved in the riots that accompanied the breakout. Hong Kong radio said 2,457 homemade weapons were seized. It did not describe them, but those seen during the riots were mostly spears and clubs.

About 300 Vietnamese climbed on rooftops in protest, but descended peacefully when the search ended, the radio said.

The police fired about 2,000 rounds of tear gas during the weekend, and said the rioters burned 53 cars and 26 huts. They said 45 security officers

and three Vietnamese were injured.

Yesterday's deportees came to Hong Kong from northern Vietnam, mostly in 1989 and 1990, a government statement said. They were not involved in the disturbances.

Deportations are closed to the media on the grounds that they have become routine. A report by two charity workers appointed to observe the operation said two people were handcuffed but there was no serious resistance.

Hong Kong has deported 2,640 Vietnamese asylum-seekers since November 1991,

and thousands more have returned voluntarily.

The 17,500 in Hong Kong's camps were among those who began fleeing Vietnam after the US-backed South Vietnam regime was defeated by the Communist North in 1975.

The government says they are not political refugees but economic migrants who should go home. Many of them have spent years in the camps, refusing cash incentives to return.

Hong Kong is anxious to close the camps before the colony returns to Chinese rule in 1997.



In exile: An old man in a Hong Kong refugee camp. Martin Woolcott, page 9

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A bomb in the laboratory

The forensic service has cut too many corners

THEY are meant to be an elite — scientists who can identify evidence which cannot be seen by the naked eye. Yet once more the forensic service is wracked by scandal. First there was Dr Frank Skuse, the forensic scientist who helped convict the Birmingham Six...

"by normal standards, the amount of explosive detected was tiny but nevertheless it should not have been there." Naturally, the Home Secretary believed the chance of the machine contaminating evidence was only "a small theoretical possibility" but even he has recognised that expert independent assessment will be needed.

This latest blow to the forensic service has links with earlier scandals. The centrifuge was bought in the same year that the all-party Commons Select Committee on Home Affairs concluded that the service was over-worked, under-funded and suffering from unacceptably low morale.

Why MPs should kick bad habits

Genuine parliamentary reform will restore public confidence

THOUGH sometimes highly technical, the reform of Parliament is not in the end a technical issue at all. It is at the heart of the need to reconstruct public confidence in our representative institutions. It is about giving people the confidence that a good and honest job is being done.

is right that procedural changes could also take the yahoo factor out of these occasions. Her pledge to alter "the whole nature and tone" of Question Time during the next Parliament cannot come too soon.

Yet Parliament is primarily a legislative assembly. Certainly it produces too many laws — eighteen Education Acts in 17 years is a disgraceful record — and the process is too confrontational and insufficiently ameliorative.

In the end, MPs need to be genuinely creative about using parliamentary reform to restore public confidence in their proceedings. That confidence will only come when people feel instinctively sympathetic to what they see, hear or read from the Chamber or from the committee rooms.

Not only did it hurt, it didn't work

The problem with the new Conservative slogan is that it isn't true

"YES IT hurt. Yes it worked." say the Conservative Party's latest Maurice Saatchi-inspired posters, unveiled yesterday. Let us hope that our welcome visitor Jacques Chirac does not see them.

It would be easier to take the new Conservative slogan more seriously if it were true. But who has made the sacrifices? And who has got the rewards? Not the same people at all.

"Yes it hurt. Yes it worked" is a slogan which might have been devised for a This England column. It absolutely sums up an English upper-class view of the world. It is the slogan of character-forming cold showers, of compulsory cross-country runs, of short sharp shocks, of social discipline enforced through corporal punishment, of the philosophy of "this may hurt now but you'll be grateful in the years to come" and of the entire sadistic culture which lurks behind so much of English conservatism.



Letters to the Editor

The Euro-express rolls on

ALAN Simpson and Colin Hines (Banking on failure?, Arena, May 13) think the spectre of a single currency leaves something to be desired. They single out the Maastricht criteria of a 3 per cent limit on public borrowing as a proportion of GDP for special comment as an obvious evil.

So if Simpson and Hines and the 50 Labour MPs think 3 per cent is too low, they either mean the national debt should be greater than 60 per cent of GDP, or they think 2.5 per cent inflation is too low.

YOUR leader (May 9) claims: "For the past two years the pound has been remarkably stable against the Deutschmark". Maybe we have diverging concepts of stability. On that day, the pound bought 2.30 DM. So let's take that as a base value.

years ago, May 1994, giving a 6.32 per cent annual devaluation over the period. Or four years ago, in the heady summer after the last general election, 2.96 DM, a compound devaluation of 6.42 per cent.

In the spring of 1988, it stood at 3.30 DM, giving a devaluation of 5.11 per cent per annum. Whereas at Christmas, 1971, I as a student bought a pound for 8.32 DM, compound 5.39 per cent annual devaluation.

So maybe you are right: in terms of devaluation against the DM, the last two years don't really stand out so very much, but as a period of stability they were truly remarkable.

IF Colin Matthews (Letters, May 10) thinks we haven't given any thought to the wider issues of monetary union, maybe he would like to comment on the following. Monetary union means more centralisation of power.

If you have one currency you must also have one set of financial levers (interest rates, etc). We cannot have 15 countries with one currency and 15 interest-rate policies. This means centralisation of power, probably to a central bank.

I do not favour an unelected central bank full of monetarists enforcing a perpetual economic orthodoxy, and I do not believe that 15 countries with varying economic strengths and with varying degrees of enthusiasm for the European

ideal can agree on a single financial policy. Glenn Little, 33 Wycliffe Road, Northampton NN1 5JQ.

AW DRURY said (Letters, May 13) that before submitting in a second currency reform he wants "at least some reciprocal harmonisation from our European partners".

While in Britain we complain about having to buy a can of a soft drink measured in grams rather than fluid ounces, our partners on mainland Europe are in school, learning the international language of business — English.

What outcry would ensue if we were told that to conduct business in Europe we had to learn the language of our continental partners? It's about time that we realised that the European Union is not a conspiracy to humiliate the UK, but an attempt at compromise that often benefits us.

ARE Ernest Wistrich and his European Movement (Letters, May 11), with their "intense information campaign", by any chance related to the European Movement which assured the electorate in 1974 that a vote for the EEC was a vote only for a trade relationship, and that there was no intention whatsoever of moving towards European Union?

A Calvert, 127 Cornwallis Avenue, Aylesham, Kent.

A volley of gunfire over Labour's proposal to control firearms

HAVE been involved in competitive pistol shooting for three years. I represent Wiltshire at county level and harbour a desire to represent my country by the year 2000.

The Labour Party's proposed legislation to outlaw all handguns other than those capable of firing a single round of 22 calibre ammunition (Logbooks for gun owners proposed by Straw, May 14) will put an end to such plans.

Jack Straw is extremely myopic to assume that firearms cannot be enjoyed for sporting purposes. Would he consider extending the proposed ban to encompass other sports such as rifle shooting, javelin and archery? My gravest concern is that the Labour Party is seeking a cheap, quick-win solution by "banning the guns".

The proposed legislation will not prevent future killings, whether by a firearm, a broad-knife, or a seven iron. Misguided legislation will not reduce armed robbery or terrorist activity.

IF GUN control comes about from Labour's proposals or in knee-jerk action by the Government, this would mainly address the questions of the legal ownership and use of guns. Far more serious are their illegal ownership

and use, and registration systems will do little to solve them. Unless sentencing policies for ownership, carrying and use of unregistered guns are seen to be a sufficient deterrent then firearms crimes will continue unabated.

Useful starting points for testing of the effectiveness of deterrence sentences could be minimum non-parole sentences of five years for illegal ownership, 10 years for carrying, and 20 years for use.

A serious start has to be made somewhere to stop the use of firearms by criminals. Unless the politicians are seen to act positively, the public cry for capital punishment for the most serious firearms offences may well become irresistible.

John Storey, Bury Road, Etonfield, Bury, Lancashire BL9.

USED to be an enthusiastic handgun shooter and represented the UK in international competition using a semi-automatic multi-shot weapon. Yet I can see no logical reason for any private individual to own a handgun. Labour's suggestion of allowing individuals to have only 22 single-shot pistols is reasonable and sustainable.

Once upon a time most boys played with toy guns but the majority grew out of it. It is time the shooting community also grew up, realised that handguns are an unacceptable risk and accepted a total ban. Mike Humphrey, Genesta Road, Westcliff on Sea, Essex SS0.

Bad behaviour

WHILE covering at my school for an absent member of staff I came across a pupil in Year 7 who is becoming unteachable. Fortunately we have a system whereby such pupils can be removed from the classroom by a senior member of staff.

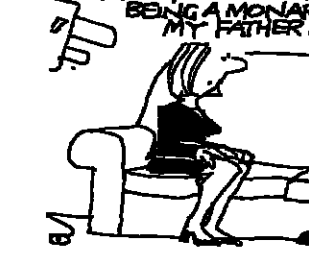
This boy, only 12 and slight, left my presence with this somewhat chilling message: "When the men in white coats come with the police to take me away for murder... I'll be the one I've murdered." The boy was brought back shortly before the lunchtime bell, by which time the class was being supervised by another member of staff.

This member of staff and myself are both young, female and under 21 in normal circumstances we have little or no trouble even with big and boisterous 16-year-olds. Yet we are not trained social workers or educational psychologists. It is time local authority panels and school governors found that there are pupils in schools who simply cannot be taught in an everyday classroom situation.

WHY did you publish the advertisement "The Message of the Leader of the Muslim Ummah" (May 14)? Are you not aware of the recent EU Justice and Home Affairs Ministers' Joint Action to fight racism and xenophobia, signed by Michael Howard? Under this, the UK has agreed to punish certain types of behaviour, notably:

- Public incitement to discrimination, violence or racial hatred in respect of a person's colour, race, religion or national or ethnic origin; and
Public dissemination or distribution of tracts, pictures or other material with expressions of racism or xenophobia.

Family fortunes on the box



MUST rebut Ros Coward's suggestion (Thanks for the cultural capital, Dad, May 13) that the children of TV people become TV people themselves because of the who-they-know factor. I rebut it, not because our daughter, Samantha Norman, "daughter of Barry (himself son of Ealing film director Leslie)", was mentioned as one of them, but because Ms Coward upholds a conspiracy theory where there is no conspiracy.

It would be so easy if there were. There'd have been a short cut to the years Samantha and her sister, Emma, spent as struggling freelance journalists learning their trade. I daresay Emma Forbes, Caron Keating, Emma Freud etc would have got to where they are sooner if it were just a matter of their fathers buying someone a pink gin and saying: "Give the sprog a job, old boy."

It doesn't work like that. What does work is the unconscious motivation that starts almost as soon as they pop out of the womb, the family discussion at every Sunday lunch about what's good presentation/writing/production and what isn't. It's the same effect that made Nigel Clough able to dribble a football as soon as he could dribble down his bit. It's why doctors' children often go in for medicine. Why Martin Amis became a writer instead of a truck driver.

It's not nepotism, it's nurture. In the old days a blacksmith's son became a blacksmith. A TV presenter's daughter wants to get into TV

Peter Mandelson's interests

I AM yet again astonished by the Guardian Diary's inability to get its facts straight. I would be grateful if you would point out to your Diary staff that my trip to South-East Asia was properly recorded in the Register of Members' Interests on the day I returned to Britain (April 16). Sir Gordon Downey's office are happy to confirm this and the registered entry will be published in the normal way.

HEAR that Robin Cook is angry with Gordon Brown over his rubbishing of proposals to boost public expenditure. I hear that Mr Brown has not spoken to Peter Mandelson for 18 months because of a supposed vendetta against him by the self-styled media guru. I hear that Mr Mandelson has no time for John Prescott, who he thinks has the wrong image. I hear that Mr Prescott holds little regard for Tony Blair. And nobody seems to like Harriet Harman.

ISLES OF SCILLY: The Tamar Valley is verdant and full of blossom but coastal land in the far west of Cornwall, between Mousehole and Penberth, appears bleached and dry with foaming black-thorn dominating cliff gardens once cultivated with violets and early potatoes. Beyond the Ruzel Stone buoy, a solitary swallow flies towards land whilst below deck, in Scillonian's lounge, a duo from Padstow sing of Maggie May and Row Boatmen Row. After a sunlit voyage across only slightly choppy sea we berth at St Mary's and board a launch to join the flotilla following final races of the World Pilot-Gig Championships. Over 40 brightly coloured gigs, each with six oarsmen and a cox, have made their way out to Nut Rock off Sampson. From there begins a series of exciting races across open water of The Roads, backed by Tresco's white beaches and a myriad of islets and emerging rocks fringed and covered in seaweed. Gigs originated

nearby 200 years ago as the work boats of sea-folk around Cornwall and the Scillies. These speedy, clinker-built boats can be rowed or sailed and carried pilots seeking ships entering south-west waters. They were also used for salvage, smuggling and rescue. In the 1960s, Scilly and Newquay rowing clubs began gig restoration including the Bonnet, built in 1830 for St Mary's support, and still racing today. The first new gig (Serica) was built in 1987 by Tom Chudleigh and since the 1980s many more have been commissioned, built from Cornish narrow-leaved elm, fastened by copper nails. The new 32ft boats are of lighter construction than the originals, built for speed and less suitable for rough weather. Since 1990 the championships have attracted growing numbers of spectators, including last year's winner, Ann Glanville, is named after the Tamar waterman who died at Saltash in 1830.

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Diary
Matthew Norman

FROM the yet-to-be-opened Severn bridge comes news of British policing at its majestic best. Last Sunday, in protest at the bridge being motorway and thus closed to bikes, Mr Lyn Davies cycled over it, covered in balloons, in the hope of getting some attention. However, no one was there, and having sprayed a slogan on a bit of steel and taken a label from a packing case as proof of his visit, Mr Davies departed. Only then was he noticed by the police, and he was arrested when the fun began. The 49-year-old engineer, a member of Friends of the Earth, was taken to Newport nick, where Special Branch officers told him he was "a suspected terrorist". Held overnight, he was not released until a trained team had searched his house the next day. Mr Davies will appear before the Chesterport bench on June 18 on charges of criminal damage (the spraying) and — wait for it — theft (the label). The police explanation for this saga is that, with Prince Charles opening the bridge on June 5, they were rightly worried about bombs. As yet, no bombs. Multi-coloured balloons, with cycling slogans scrawled on in felt tip... so that's what the well-dressed terrorist is wearing this summer. Helmets off, gentlemen, and peaked caps aloft.

YET more evidence of rising standards of police intelligence comes from Killingbeck, West Yorkshire, where PC Steve Guest has lost his brand new motorcycle. Police magazine reports that, when it broke down after night duty, the constable put safety first and wheeled it off the road, leaving it by a nearby house. When he went to fetch it later that day, however, it had vanished. Close students of the incident suggest that PC Guest's tactical error may have been selecting a house that is used as a hostel for bailed prisoners.

MEANWHILE, journalists covering the Police Federation's conference in Scarborough are wondering if the Central Hotel has gone too far in tailoring itself for the clientele. The first item on the breakfast menu is Black's Fizz, and the second is Bloody Mary. For those who can't cope with proper drinking in the mornings, item three is Black Velvet.

A DAY after pointedly refusing to rule himself out of the running, sane and rational Paul Johnson has launched his campaign for the editorship of the Catholic Herald with a Daily Mail article in the place (which contains the delicious phrase, "My advice to the Pope is..."). Paul makes a rousing appeal for strong Church leadership, and analysts equate it with an application for the Herald job. Paul's chances are hard to judge. He has many supporters, of course, but others are not so keen. "Hardly a byword for constancy of beliefs, is he?" sniffs one anonymous bishop. "No one minds if he switches from Tory to Labour every hour on the hour, but religion's different. Imagine if he wrote a leader saying he's had a change of mind, and that Satan's the chap to follow after all."

IN the Sun, John Humphrys answers one of the most impenetrable mysteries of the age. There are three things newscasters are always asked, he writes, the first being: "What do newscasters say to each other at the end of the news?" The answer, Mr Humphrys says, is "Fancy a quick one?" Oh well, it may be not very PC, but at least it explains that enigmatic smile of Anna Ford's when she's shutting up her papers.

SUMMER is upon us, and with it comes that much-loved occasional feature, Today's Smile. Mr B Bism writes from London, SW1, wondering whether we have heard about Jesus and St Peter playing golf? At the short first, Peter stepped up to the tee and — whack! — the ball flew straight in for a hole in one. Then Jesus stepped up and — whack! — straight in the hole. As he walked out to get his ball, a spectator said: "Who does he think he is?" "No, he is Jesus," said St Peter, wearily. "He thinks he's Jack Nicklaus."

HOW ABOUT "LABOUR ISN'T HURTING"? IT HURTS US WORKERS. A cartoon by Aulton.

Psycho-babble in the corridors of power

Commentary Catherine Bennett

RELATIONS between Gordon Brown and Peter Mandelson are reputed to be so dire as to require the services of a conciliator. Gordon won't speak to Peter and, even though Peter says he'd like to speak to Gordon, Gordon's friends think Peter is only saying that to put Gordon down. What to do? Donald Dewar, Labour's Chief Whip, has been proposed as a potential peacemaker; others believe that only Tony Blair himself can bring harmony where there is such discord. But the longevity and intensity of the Gordon/Peter feud seem to demand the services of a professional; someone trained in sniffing out the hidden causes of outward hostility. The enemies must be encouraged to explore their emotions; taught to go beyond the surface feelings of anger, jealousy and betrayal. As Susie Orbach might say — what's really going on here? In exchange for a modest

fee, the celebrity "mind doctor", Raj Persaud, would no doubt be delighted to offer his insights — could some mutual antipathy be to blame? Dylan Evans, aspirant analyst to Princess Diana, might wish to go back further, questioning for formative encounters with threatening kippers. In his hands, the case of "Peter M" could become the Rat Man of our times. But who better to resolve the Brown/Mandelson conflict than the representatives of Antidote? This new group of psychotherapists recently proclaimed its mission to promote "emotional literacy" in politics. Susie Orbach is a founder member: "The idea is to widen the political vocabulary so that emotions are open, not hidden," she says. Members of Antidote appear to believe that political strife could not possibly result from genuine differences of opinion about the real world outside. If only politicians would cultivate their emotions, all would be empathy and co-operation. Tell it to the Eurosceptics. But the director of Antidote, James Park, has already offered to reconcile the sceptics and their adversaries. "If they would give us three days, it may be possible to bring them to the position where they could have a dialogue." If this feat can be accomplished over a long week-

end, the resolution of the Mandelson/Brown non-speak should be a trifling affair. What treatment can the two men expect? James Park has written a book about men and their mothers — "the heart of the Oedipal minefield" — and is currently learning to be an Attachment-Based Psychotherapist. His aim, presumably, will be to discover whether Brown and Mandelson are really re-enacting problematic relations with their early carers. But not all psychotherapists are attachment theorists. Some might prefer to trace the conflicted Brown/Mandelson behaviour back to birth trauma, or inadequate self-actualisation, or repressed libidinal urges. Some might propose a course of art therapy, sand-play, or group analytic drama. Before Antidote goes to work, perhaps it could make clear which psychotherapeutic school enjoys pre-eminence in its ranks. Alas, any firm decision is likely to bring complaints from purveyors of rival brands, just as Princess Diana's public self-analysis recently prompted criticism from therapists who were not Susie Orbach. For a healing art, psychotherapy has a history notably short on harmony. The psychologist Stuart Sutherland has observed

that "the development of psychoanalysis has perhaps been marked by more doctrinal schism and intolerance than that of any other movement in history, with the exception of the Christian religion." If Tony Blair has a rough way with critics of New Labour, it is mild compared with Freud's treatment of former favourites who came to challenge his dogma. As one of his biographers, Peter Gay, said, "Freud in politics was the true politician, more devoted than in the rest of his conduct." Indeed, if New Labour has anything to learn from the traditions of psychotherapy it is not so much emotional literacy, but the efficient parsing and persecution of heretics and apostates. So far, Blair's treatment of his more troublesome juniors seems to have been limited to repr-

influence upon others depending on his strong terrorism and sadism." Later, Freud identified the "swine" Stelak as a case of "moral insanity", and informed Stelak that he was mentally ill, with a neurotic father complex. Jung's independent thinking was attributed to "strong neurotic and ascetic drives", while Freud's revisionism was identified by Freud as a "mental degeneration which took the form of a paranoia". Contemporary struggles between psychotherapists lack the rhetorical bite of Freud's Secret Committee, but "emotional literacy" still seems to elude the profession. The European Therapy Studies Institute recently accused other therapists of being "elitist organisations grabbing territory for themselves by wielding power inappropriately through registration". In Psychoanalysis: The Impossible Profession, Janet Malcolm questioned an analyst about the perpetual bickering within the New York Psychoanalytic Institute. "Used to trouble me," he admitted, "until I thought about other professions and realised that it's no different anywhere else... There are Oedipally significant positions in every profession, and when people are up for them it creates a crisis that infantilises them — causes grown men to squabble like kids about trivial things." Leave out the Oedipus fantasy, and you have an admission that people who profess "emotional literacy" can behave no better than anyone else, maybe worse. Why do the representatives of Antidote expect politicians to take any notice of them? Because the Oedipus theory, the Master mothers didn't? Or because they want power without the bother of election? What's really going on here?

Some might propose a course of art therapy, sand-play, or group analytic drama

mands, gagging, and the occasional accusation of "infantile incompetence" or "gross discourtesy". On one occasion, however, he suggested that his critics "needed therapy", a sign that he may one day excel at the kind of hostile diagnosis in which Freud and his followers specialised. When, for example, Adler became the first of Freud's disciples to dare to challenge the Oedipus theory, the Master swiftly diagnosed him as deranged: "It is the revolt of an abnormal individual, driven mad by ambition, his

A cry from the heart of Labour



Martin Kettle

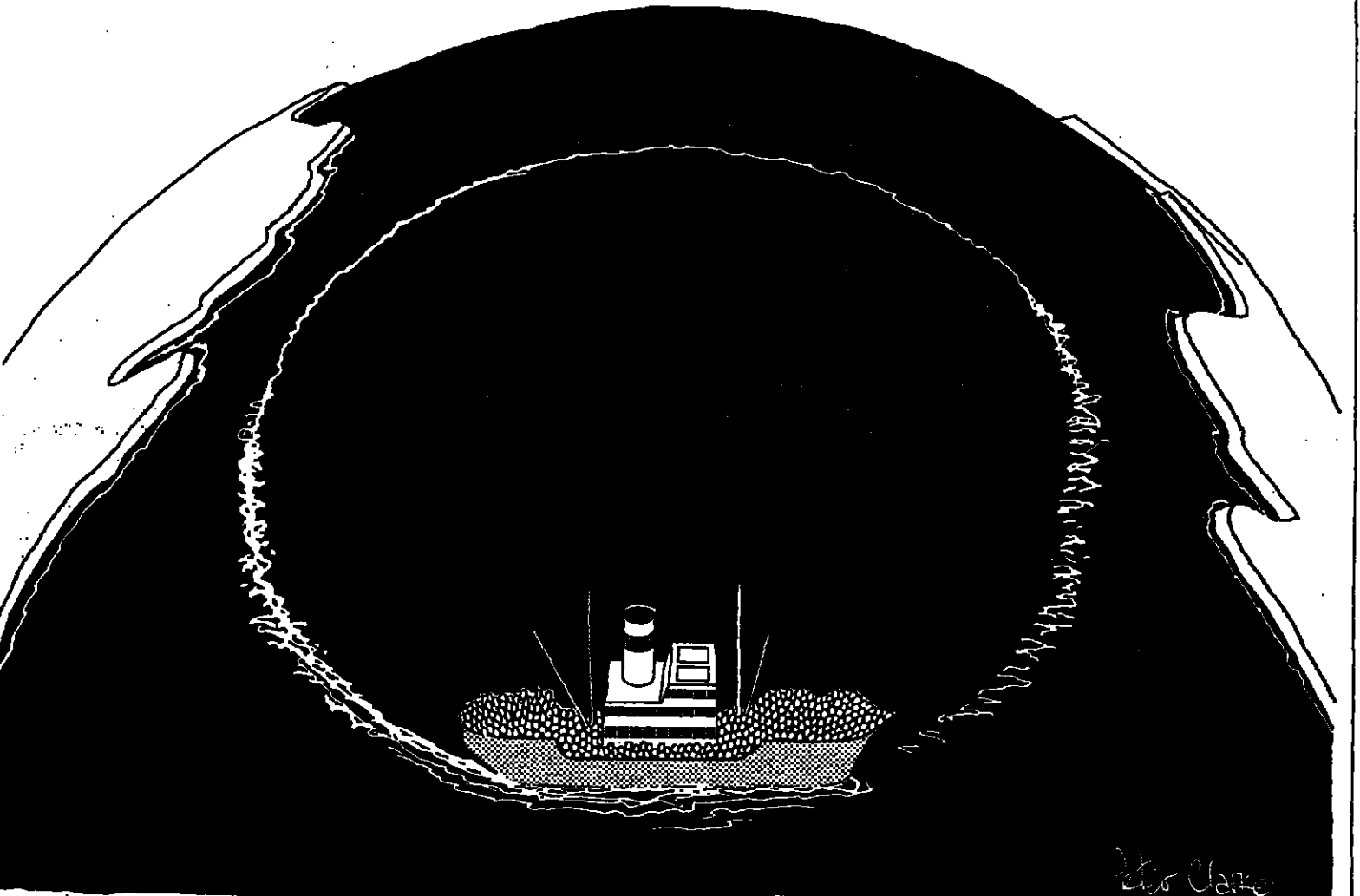
ONLY a fool would say personalities do not matter in the current bubbling and rumbling at the top of the Labour Party. Of course they matter, especially when we are talking about some of the proudest and most ambitious politicians of their generation. But the weekend mutterings against Gordon Brown and the argument which erupted in public with John Prescott's speech in Bournemouth yesterday now begin to define a more durably political issue: the role of the Treasury under Labour, an issue central to any Labour government at any time.

he is not Tony Blair's number two, a position held de facto by Brown or even, many MPs like to claim, by Peter Mandelson. Prescott does not have the clout, even as deputy, to demand and get the shadow position of his choice. Instead he is left shadowing Michael Heseltine, even though nobody, least of all Prescott himself, seriously expects him to inherit that empire. For the past year Prescott has toyed with various roles for himself in government. All of them envisage him playing a creative role in economic policy. He has even spoken warmly of the idea tried by the first Wilson government in 1964, of establishing a separate Department of Economic Affairs (headed by the then deputy leader George Gordon Brown and the argument which erupted in public with John Prescott's speech in Bournemouth yesterday now begin to define a more durably political issue: the role of the Treasury under Labour, an issue central to any Labour government at any time. Prescott's speech was a cry from the heart — perhaps even the cry of a defeated politician. If went public with things he has felt for many months, it called for the re-energising of the power of the Treasury under Labour. It attacked the dangers of a so-called "Super-Treasury", which Prescott claimed was widening its role to encompass other "economic" departments or portfolios — by implication trade, industry and employment — under its capacious umbrella. And it climaxed with the warning that it would be detrimental to Labour's aims to allow "an overbearing role for the Treasury which will then dominate every aspect of government life".

The speech did not mention Gordon Brown by name, but then it did not have to. Prescott has been fuming privately for months, not just about the iron embrace in which he believes Brown has wrapped Labour's spending commitments, but also against the Shadow Chancellor's wider political ambitions. Prescott believes Brown is driven by an imperial desire to achieve a hegemony over economic-policy-making which will reduce departmental ministers to puppets and supplicants. Hence the warnings against the so-called Super-Treasury. Yet Prescott's anxieties derive from his own long preoccupation with employment policy. Prescott's commitment to putting job creation strategies at the top of his priorities has often put him on a collision course with Brown, and Prescott has become increasingly preoccupied with the implications for the structure of government.

More recently the two men have fought a surrogate battle over Labour's railway policy — transport, along with other themes of Prescott's career. Prescott and his allies wanted Labour to commit itself to a more thorough re-nationalisation of the railways. Brown and his supporters fought to keep the status quo. Short sometimes caught in the middle. The eventual outcome, probably predictably, was a victory for Brown. Last month, Brown made a speech at the Manchester Business School setting out his strategy for the Treasury. It was an impeccable re-statement of a Labour approach to economic-policy-making. It floated the idea of a "real economy unit" inside the department, targeting jobs, investment and growth, giving these aims the same status and priority as public-spending control and the fight against inflation. To Prescott, however, these otherwise admirable aims seemed to signal yet another extension of the Treasury empire and Brown's political power.

THUS the two things — personality and politics — have come inextricably together in the conduct of Brown's style and content of the shadow Treasury brief since 1992. Brown is a politician of the highest seriousness. He is a planner, a reader, a worrier and a thinker. He plots his every move with elaborate and, to some, excessive care. He has a monumental capacity for work and power. Brown runs by far the largest shadow ministerial office, including the most effective press operation of any Labour spokesman other than Blair, a network which is at once the envy and despair of his colleagues. Prescott is by no means the only senior Labour figure to harbour deep reservations about his style and his project. But Prescott is the first to go public, and may find few rewards for his candour.



Worlds upside down

Instead of planning rationally to cope with the plight of refugees, the West continues to turn each new crisis into a three-act drama, argues Martin Woollacott

WHEN the family of Nuruddin Farah, the Somali writer, ran away from a ruined Mogadishu, they left, in the words of his sister, with "our beds unmade, the chairs in our dining rooms overturned, our kitchens swept, our dishes in the sinks, our future undone." They went in ships from Mogadishu to Mombasa, just as Liberians are now going from Monrovia, and just as the boat people now being forced to go home once left Vietnam. All of these different people were touched, as Nuruddin Farah's father said of his own family, by "the virus of fleeing". That terrible combination of fractured domesticity, loss of faith in the future, and of the infectiousness of the urge to escape is something which more and more experience. Such people have another thing in common: that after the heartbreak of leaving a home, and after the initial dangers of flight, the ordeal is rarely over. Then can come despair as refugees are turned away from country after country, or the long slow loss of hope, or of reason, in detention camps. There is no guarantee, when you leave, of anything but pain. Yet the numbers of refugees and the internally displaced — those who are refugees in their own country — have

because of the growing numbers. Rich and poor countries alike fear the costs and the disruption of accepting refugees on a large scale. They also fear the precedent, because there is no denying that once an immigration "chain" is set up, for whatever reason, it is virtually impossible to stop, even when conditions in the stricken country improve. The boat people from Vietnam were a special case because of the political context. But they show how such chains are created. Once the first groups had made it, via camps in third countries, to America, Australia, and France, the myth of an easy escape to freedom and wealth took tenacious root. The Americans encouraged it because they found satisfaction in anything which showed the Vietnamese Communists in a bad light. By the time they reconsidered and began trying to signal to would-be boat people, by broadcasts and other means, that there was no automatic welcome in the West, it was too late. As is well known, everywhere in the world governments are taking measures to keep out immigrants. The German constitutional court yesterday upheld that country's new regulations, while the French government is wavering at this moment over contentious recommendations from a parliamentary commission on immigration. The US Senate has just pushed through additional measures aimed at curbing illegal immigration. The European police agency recently declared that the smuggling of illegal immigrants was its "main concern". None of this is supposed to affect the "genuine refugee", but naturally it does. In any

case one kind of immigrant status tends to blur into another. What, for instance, would be the status of those on board the Liberian ships? Most would certainly not qualify for asylum. They are merely fearful people fleeing a bad and dangerous place, and looking for somewhere tolerable in which to begin new lives or to wait until things are better at home. Those who successfully flee war and chaos tend to include many of a country's educated class, the natural leaders, the technically qualified — the human material that is vital to reconstruction. Refugees themselves debate, and may never resolve, the question of whether they should have left or stayed to hold back whatever fate threatened their country. Considerations of this kind reinforce the argument of the UNHCR that the movement of refugees is a problem that should never be considered in isolation. The reports commissioned by Sadaka Opat, the High Commissioner, in 1989 and earlier this year describe the same tragedy in three acts.

IN the first phase, there is specialist knowledge of impending disaster, but a refusal by governments to listen, on the grounds that warnings are too a penny, and what is only potential can be ignored. Then comes the crisis and an intense flurry of public concern, fundraising, and aid-giving. For example, in the first two weeks after the scale of the Rwanda tragedy became clear, \$2 billion was pledged, a sum of money which, as some relief workers have sourly pointed out, could, if spent previously in Rwanda, have seriously altered the social and political situation there for the better. Finally the third phase sets in. Public interest fades, aid drops off, but the refugees remain, as they do in Zaire, where a million Rwandan refugees still struggle to survive in the camps. The UNHCR, and the non-governmental agencies, are then left to cope, with dwindling funds. This last phase is also a critical time of mistrust between the countries in the affected region and those distant from it. Anxious to deflect the refugee stream from themselves and to show their own public opinion that something is being done, distant countries work manfully to persuade those in the region to take the refugees. Money will be found, they promise, help will be given, and, in time, a quota of those displaced will be accepted in Europe or America. Such promises tend to get forgotten or compromised as time goes on, laying down a bad lesson for the future. This sad graph, in which governments act and public opinion reacts only at the height of a crisis, neglecting both its early stages and the long aftermath, is a chart of inadequacy. The choice is not between a cold closing of the doors and open house; it is between a rational policy of prevention and management, one that will not always work but would usually moderate the consequences of war and political breakdown, and allowing ourselves to repeat again and again the self-defeating pattern of alternating engagement and disengagement with the crises that send so many families out from their homes, their kitchens unswep, their chairs overturned, to the hazards of escape and exile.

Advertisement for "Adopt a Granny" charity. Text: "She has no-one to turn to but you. Don't let her down." Includes contact information for Help the Aged, FREEPOST, London E01B 1JY, and phone number 0171 888 0255.

Malcolm MacEwan

Profiting out of losses

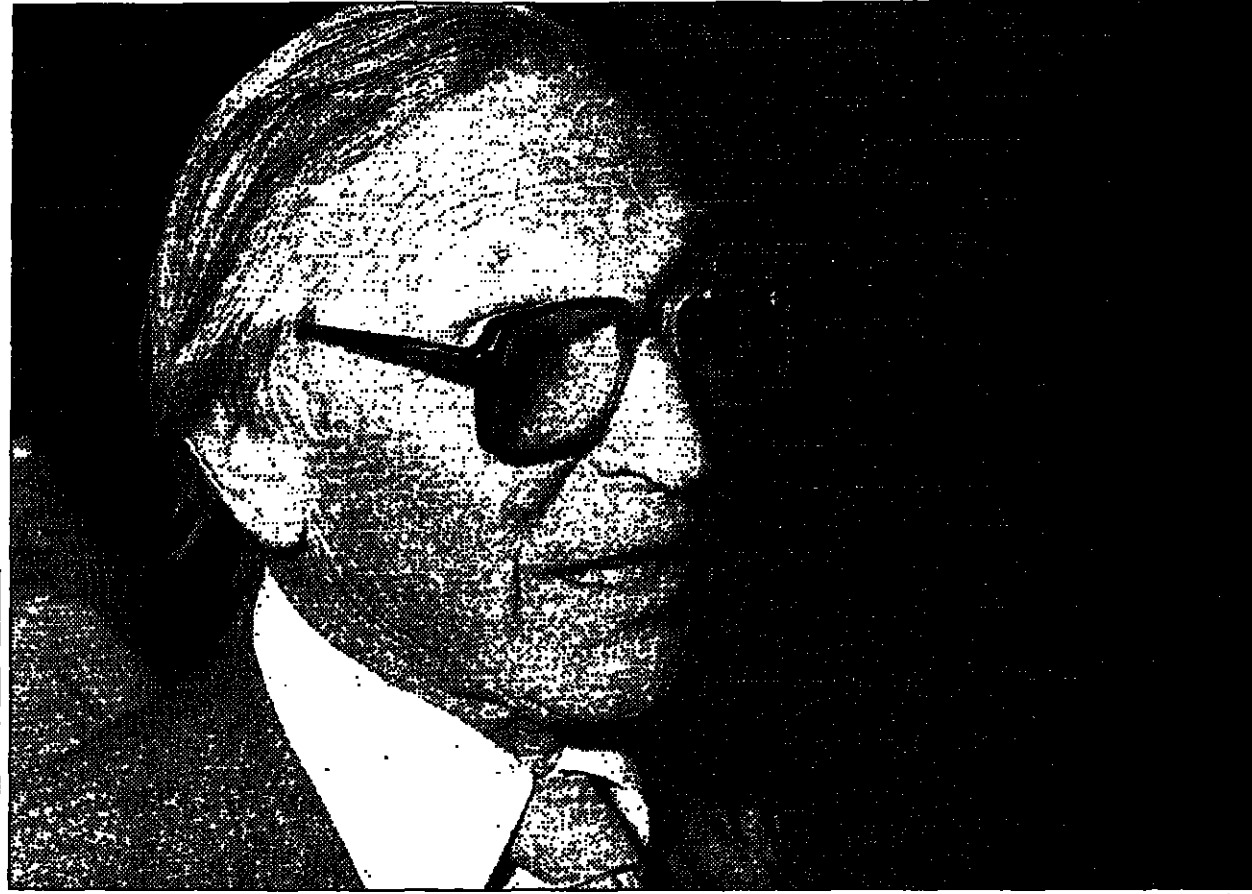
MALCOLM MacEwan, who has died aged 84, was one of those people whose endless zest for living enables them to overcome terrible misfortunes in their personal lives and come out fighting on public issues. He came from an affluent Highland family and was sent to an English public school (Rosalind), "as narrow and phillistine as could be found" to lose his local accent.

At Aberdeen University he learned forestry, and came under the influence of the Cairnness novelist Neil Gunn, who convinced him, in 1933, that Scotland would be better off if it governed itself. But that year came the disaster he later described as one of the best things that had happened to him. At the last his right leg in a motorbike crash. Months in an Inverness nursing home made him a reader and, with a law degree from Edinburgh, he joined the handful of zealots producing the pre-war Glasgow edition of the Daily Worker. This led to 13 years as foreign editor and parliamentary correspondent for its London edition, covering Labour's foreign policy towards Greece, Yugoslavia and Korea. His memoirs, *The*

Greening of a Red, (1991) are a useful reminder of the duplicity of both British and Soviet governments.

Characteristically, his expulsion from the Communist Party, like the departure of many others at the time of the Hungarian revolution in 1956, "seemed like a second amputation at the time," yet set him off on the ecological approach to politics that lasted for the rest of his life. "We had been living in a self-created party ghetto," he wrote, but personal tragedies on both sides had been surmounted by his happy marriage to Ann Wheeler, an architect and planner. Their house at 31 Tanza Road, in what he insisted was the fashionable end of Hampstead, became the base for a growing extended family, so that visitors never knew whether they were talking to hosts or fellow-guests.

Ann worked for the London County Council's planning department, and then for the team that produced Colin Buchanan's report *Traffic in Towns*. Malcolm found a job on *The Architects' Journal*, which, with its private pub in the basement at 9 Queen Anne's Gate, was then in one of its crusading periods. In 1959 he produced its *Motropo-*



Malcolm MacEwan... expulsion from the Communist Party was 'like a second amputation'

lis issue, a pioneering indictment of the impact of the motor vehicle on urban life.

For Malcolm it was "one of the turning points of my life" and he moved on to edit the journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects, seeking like his assistant and successor, Roger Barnard, to make it the conscience of the architectural profession. Recognising the gulf between practitioners and the actual users of buildings he produced the report *Crisis in Architecture* which held out the ways open to the profession to reform itself and its collective aims. It was ignored.

Meanwhile the MacEwens had moved to Somerset, and to his great delight he found

himself a government-appointed member of the Exmoor National Park Committee. He was a lone voice exposing the absurdity of fellow-members undertaking to conserve the moorlands and woodlands of the Devon-Somerset border while also being offered enormous subsidies by the Ministry of Agriculture to plough up the moor or to plant conifers.

So the chairman described him as "anti-farmer" and the vice-chairman called him a "professional rabble-rouser" and asked: "Who is this Scottish poplar who comes in here and tells us what we can and cannot do?" The Forchester Report of 1977 completely vindicated the attitude taken

by MacEwan and the Exmoor Society. He saw it as a landmark in the history of nature and landscape conservation, with a sobering effect on the Country Landowners Association and the National Farmers Union, while the Ministry of Agriculture, acutely embarrassed by the exposure of its policy of secrecy and non-cooperation with the park committee, produced "statistical evidence that fully confirmed figures on the rate of moorland loss."

Malcolm had once again been the gadfly who goaded others into action, and he and Ann went on to write a series of books on the dilemmas of the national parks and of countryside conservation.

Late in life he became a friend and host for the American philosopher of urban life Lewis Mumford, and concluded that "no lasting solution to the problems of war, social disorder and environmental degeneration can be found without abandoning the high-energy, high-mobility, intensely individualistic life developed by the advanced industrial nations."

He thought this view just as revolutionary, for our day, as Marxism had been for his.

General Jean Crépin

Man behind the Exocet

GENERAL Jean Crépin, who has died aged 87, was widely regarded as the father of the French missile programme, including its nuclear deterrent, and the Exocets used to devastating effect in the 1982 Falklands conflict. It was Crépin who commanded the artillery in General Philippe Leclerc's Free French Second Armoured Division when it liberated Paris in August 1944. And it was Crépin again who replaced General Massu as commander of the Algiers army corps during the 1960 *Algérie Française* anti-De Gaulle revolt.

After graduating from L'Ecole Polytechnique, Crépin was an army officer in China and Africa. When France fell in 1940 he was in the Caseros and met Leclerc. He was to participate, with the legendary 2nd Armoured Division, in all of the general's campaigns in Libya, Tunisia and northern Europe. In 1943 he became commander of the division's artillery.

After the war he was appointed commissar for Tonkin and North Annam. He was spared the humiliation of France's eventual defeat in Vietnam by a return to Paris. In 1949, now a two star general, he became military adviser to defence minister René Pleven, and military counsellor to Prime Minister Georges Bidault. In 1954, after serving as deputy general secretary of national defence, he became inspector general for weapons programmes and manufacture. But as the Algerian war was sucking France's military elite into its embrace, Crépin collected his third star, with the army corps in Algiers before rising, with a fourth star, to command a division in the southern Oran region.

Crépin was a tough, uncompromising soldier, and there was never any hint of the excessive vigour which spoiled the reputations of so many of his peers. So, two months after replacing Massu, he became chief of French forces in Algeria, replacing the disgraced General Challe.

In February of the following year, aged 53, he became France's youngest five star general, assuming command of French forces in Germany. Thus did he end his army career as the last French general to command a central European NATO sector. He left the army in 1967 and began a career in industry. As

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Crépin... five star career

president of Nord-Aviation he sponsored research and development of anti-tank and surface-to-air missiles. Most of the current arsenal of Hot, Milan and Roland systems, the Phönix and Hades tactical nuclear missiles, and the Exocet, were developed under Crépin's guidance. He oversaw the merger between Nord and Sud Aviation and Sereb to form SNIAS (now Aérospatiale), remained vice-president until his 1975 retirement, and was until recently a military adviser to the company.

Crépin's wife, Simone, predeceased him, and he is survived by his two daughters.

Julian Howarth
Jean Crépin, soldier and industrialist, born September 1, 1908; died May 4, 1996

Lucille Bremer

Follies, fantasy and dances with Fred

THE GRACEFUL, green-eyed, red-haired Lucille Bremer, who has died aged 73, was one of the best dancing partners Fred Astaire ever had. Pity her face was so strangely expressionless and that her acting was no more than adequate, which may partly explain why she made only seven films in her career.

Bremer was brought up in Philadelphia and at the age of 12 joined the corps de ballet of its opera company. While still a teenager, she became a high-kicking Rockette at New York's Radio City, later dancing in the chorus of Broadway musicals and at smart Manhattan night clubs, at one of which she was spotted by Arthur Freed, MGM's top musical producer.

Freed and Bremer began an affair and he groomed her for stardom by sending her for drama coaching and giving her the smallest role of Judy Garland's flighty older sister in Vincente Minnelli's *Meet Me in St Louis* (1944). Attractive in turn-of-the-century costumes, she tells Garland: "When you get to my age, you'll find out there are far more important things in life than boys," though she puts the whole family on alert when expecting a proposal from her boyfriend on a long-

distance call from New York. Although Bremer scarcely danced in her debut film, Freed thought her ready to partner Astaire in the two best production numbers in *Ziegfeld Follies* the following year, both directed by Minnelli and choreographed by Robert



Lucille Bremer... one of Astaire's best partners

Alton. The first, *This Heart of Mine*, based on the Harry Warren/Arthur Freed tune, was set in a stylised ballroom where Astaire as a monogled gentleman thief wooed Princess Bremer, with the intention of stealing her jewels during a pas de deux. In *Line-*

house Blues, an orientaled ballet, Bremer is a Chinese harlot for whom Astaire, a sad-faced coolie, forms a passion. After being accidentally wounded, he dreams a love duet in a willow pattern setting as he lies dying in a London street. In scarlet jackets and trowsers, the couple execute a range of erotic steps, especially in an interplay with fans.

Bremer then co-starred with Astaire in Minnelli's Technicolor musical fantasy *Yolanda and the Thief*. She played a naive Catholic heiress, a target of Astaire as a crooked gambler who, to swindle her out of her fortune, pretends to be her guardian angel sent from heaven. The highlights were the two ballets in which Bremer, a vermillion vision, blends perfectly with a dazzling Astaire.

The film proved too whimsical and arty for the general public, and Bremer, though charming, did not have enough charisma to carry it off. It was rumoured that she had had an abortion during the making of *Yolanda* and had broken with Freed, the putative father.

She was to make just two more films for MGM. In *Till The Clouds Roll By* (1946), an all-star tribute to Jerome

Kern, she partnered Van Johnson in the jaunty number *I Won't Dance*, and played a neurotic patient in *Dark Delusion* (1947), one of the popular Dr Kildare series.

After three non-dancing B-films, including Edgar Ulmer's anti-capitalist drama *Ruthless* (1948), in which she was surprisingly effective as one of the people ruined by an unscrupulous business tycoon, Bremer, who never really enjoyed Hollywood, retired from the screen to marry Abalar do Rodriguez, the son of a former Mexican president.

The couple lived in Mexico City for some years, before settling, with their five daughters, in La Jolla, California, where she ran a children's dress shop for many years. There was great curiosity among fans when she reappeared in public at the 1975 reunion of MGM musical stars for the launch of *That's Entertainment*. She still had auburn hair, and her pretty face was recognisable, but her figure had grown in inverse proportion to her diminished fame.

Ronald Bergan
Lucille Bremer, dancer and actress, born February 21, 1923; died April 16, 1996

Letter

Peter Waterman writes: Serge Chermayeff's obituary (May 11) concentrated on his British achievements and neglected his later thinking on measures to be taken to prevent "the liquidation of the spirit of community". These ideas appeared in 1971 in The Shape of Community - the Realization of Human Potential written with Alexander Zornits.

Chermayeff's view was that the technology must serve all human beings and not just the affluent. Mobility, "the dramatic masquerade" of modern man as passive consumer, is compared with the need for tranquility to be found by individual action and control in community.

He believed that the urban environment is to be considered as a whole. Social remedies as projects "little plans and tiny economies will vanish like needles in the urban haystack". It is the quality of all experience at the local community level that is important if people are not to be "deprived of opportunity or corrupted by a degraded environment". Chermayeff believed that the price of neglecting the poor and disadvantaged is paid for by the loss to everybody's quality of life.

His detailed solutions need re-considering but his main point is that a policy to produce a quality local community for everybody rather than national programmes for particular groups is the way to tackle our social problems.

Birthdays

Madeleine Albright, UN ambassador to the UN, 58; Richard Avedon, photographer, 73; Prof Sir James Baddiley, biochemist, 78; Dame Eugenia Charles, former prime minister of Dominica, 77; Michael Clapham, Labour MP, 53; Constance Cummings, actress, 88; Ted Dexter, former chairman, England Cricket Selectors Committee, 61; Brian Eno, rock musician, 48; David Gore-Booth, ambassador to Saudi Arabia, 53; Andrew Hargreaves, Conservative MP, 41; Richard Hogg, author, 74; Prof Lionel Knights, emeritus professor of English Literature, Cambridge University, 90; Karin Krog, jazz singer, 58; Christina Lamb, writer and journalist, 31; John Lanchbery, ballet composer, 78; Ellis Larkins, jazz pianist, 73; Barbara Lott, actress, 78; Mary Lyon, geneticist, 71; Anthony and Peter Shaffer,

Death Notices

HOLLAND, Derek Raymond of Balliol Road, Burgess who passed away peacefully on Friday 10th May 1996, aged 70 years. The funeral service will take place at the West of England Crematorium, Norton on Friday 17th May at 12 noon. Family flowers only, donations for the British Heart Foundation. All enquiries and donations to G. Sellar Co. Ltd, Funeral Directors, 73 Uxbridge Road, Heston, London, W5 2AP. 0181 874277.

HORIAN, Frances Thewer, peacefully at Cowley Manor Nursing Home on May 11th aged 90 years. Grateful thanks to the staff of Cowley Manor. Funeral service at Westbury Abbey 11.30am, Friday 17th. No flowers please. Donations to Westbury Abbey Crematorium. Fund may be sent to Masons & Sons, 54 Hewlett Road, Chesham UB8 3AH.

MAC EWEAN, Malcolm, journalist, author, socialist died peacefully on Saturday 11th May 1996 in Exmoor. Husband and 50 years companion of Ann, 65, sister of John and Susan and father of Kathy, grandfather to Jess, Dan, Beck, Ruby, Waido, Sam, Jon, Luke. We will remember him for his love, humour and zest for life. Cremation to take place at Taunton Deane Crematorium, on Tuesday May 21st at 12 noon. Flowers at discretion. All enquiries to Mrs G. Dewar, Irwinham Road, Minehead, Somerset TA24 7DQ.

MARTIN, Don L. B. Bartlett of the Inner West died May 12th aged 76 years at home. Much loved husband of Betty, and son of Deacon, Conrad, Neil, Finlay, and Brenda, uncle, grandfather, and great-grandfather. Proud Irish man and International Brigade socialist, dedicated teacher and loyal father and friend. Cremation at Westwood Crematorium, Vengent Lane, on Wednesday 22nd May, at 10.30am. In donations to St Christopher's Hospice, Synchroton or to Amnesty International. Family notices, to 50 Ravensbourne Park Crescent, SE26 6EG.

In Memoriam
JACKSON, Roy Patrick - 28.9.64 Hong Kong - 18.5.96. London. You can come home now. All is forgiven.

Asher Wallfish

Politics with a human touch

ASHER Wallfish, who has died aged 87, was one of the most incisive of Israel's journalists, able to interpret the consequences of events before other people realised there would be consequences.

For years he was the Jerusalem Post's Knesset reporter but because of his overseas contacts and broadcasting ability he represented the BBC, Newsweek, the Austra-

lian, and the Daily Mail in Israel. Israeli MPs sometimes consulted him before making speeches, and he was frequently the first to know about emergency summits in the King David Hotel.

The BBC used Wallfish as a kind of deputy correspondent, and his coverage for the corporation of Yitzhak Rabin's funeral of last year, one of his final broadcasts, was a crowning achievement. For more

than 20 years he was the Israeli correspondent of my BBC and then LBC programme *You Don't Have To Be Jewish*. His coverage for us of the Yom Kippur war and of the Entebbe rescue was remarkable for the amount of information he distilled in a ridiculously short time.

His most effective reporting was as the first journalist to delve into the political manoeuvres that led to the 1982

war in Lebanon. And he had a knack of presenting a human element. On the day of the rescue of the hijacked Israeli passengers taken to Amin's war in Lebanon. And he had a knack of presenting a human element. On the day of the rescue of the hijacked Israeli passengers taken to Amin's

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He was born in Salford and his roots played a huge part in his thinking. He took a degree in oriental languages at Oxford before emigrating to Israel in 1949, less than a year after the establishment of the Jewish state. He was not a religious Jew, but he was imbued with Zionism and had been active in the Habonim youth movement.

Before going to Israel, he worked in a Marseilles immigrant transit camp, where he met his French wife, Claude. When he arrived in the country, he became a founder member of the essentially British kibbutz of Kfar Hanassi - village of the President - in Upper Galilee, now one

of the most successful in Israel. He stayed for 12 years, working as a youth counsellor, with two years off as an emissary to the north American Jewish communities.

He left the kibbutz in 1961 and worked for three years in the Israel Defence Force's censor's office. Then the gamekeeper turned poacher and joined the Jerusalem Post. His coverage of the Yom Kippur War won him the Overseas Press Club Award. He is survived by his widow and four children.

Michael Friedland
Asher Wallfish, journalist, born June 10, 1928; died May 1 1996



Wallfish... first to know

The Guardian
The end of affirmative action
Shell gives

The Guardian INTERNATIONAL
the Observer

the Observer

الجزيرة

Financial Editor: Alex Brummer
Telephone: 0171-239-9610
Fax: 0171-833-4456

Finance Guardian

Abu Dhabi offers BCCI deal

Patrick Donovan
City Editor

MORE than 35,000 British depositors of the Bank of Credit and Commerce International look set to recoup up to 40 per cent of the money they lost when the bank collapsed in July 1991, after the Abu Dhabi government yesterday agreed to pay a compensation package worth \$1.8 billion (£1.2 billion).

and involved an estimated 150 million documents. Accountancy fees alone are estimated to have reached \$300 million. There is suspicion that the bank was widely used for money laundering and other illicit purposes as 29,000 customers have still failed to claim deposits worth more than \$200 million.

The deal appears to represent a major improvement on the terms of a previously announced 20 per cent pay-out which is scheduled for later this summer.

The Abu Dhabi government has agreed to pay \$1.55 billion directly to liquidators Deloitte & Touche. It is paying a further sum of \$250 million into an escrow account for distribution at a later date.

The liquidators declined to speculate on how much depositors stand to recoup. Well-placed sources said returns could total at least 40 per cent of original depositor losses of \$10 billion.

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Rates on the up, although not yet



Edited by Alex Brummer

By sending a clear signal that the next move in interest rates ought to be upwards, the Bank of England has potentially set itself on a collision course with Chancellor Kenneth Clarke. Plainly, Mr Clarke — already under fire within his own party for his robustly pro-European instincts and his lectures on fiscal restraint — would prefer not to come to blows with the Bank over interest rates in the period before an election, especially as the Inflation Report judgement is based only on probabilities.

Inflation report sees pay held down by part-time work and job insecurity despite Ministers' claims

Dole queue to shrink, says Bank

Larry Elliott
Economics Editor

BITAIN'S jobless total could be set to fall sharply over the coming years as rising job insecurity and the growth in part-time work keep the lid on pay increases, the Bank of England said yesterday.

think unemployment could go without triggering a surge in pay inflation, but a 6 per cent jobless rate in the UK would imply a jobless total of around 1,500,000.



Eye to eye... not for Bank of England Governor Eddie George and the Chancellor

Ken and Eddie go separate ways

John Glover in Milan and Sarah Pyle

CHANCELLOR Kenneth Clarke and Bank of England Governor Eddie George appeared to be on a collision course last night over Britain's role in Europe.

place at the centre of the European Union. "We do not want to be relegated to the margins of the great economic and political debates of the 21st century. I want the UK to have clout, to punch above its weight and to have a large say in setting the agenda for Europe."

single market had served British trade well, but said: "There is perhaps more hesitation about the justification for extending the principles underlying the single market legislation into other areas."

ALEXANDRE Lamfalussy, head of the European Monetary Institute, yesterday shocked the financial community by announcing he is to step down next year, writes Richard Thomas.

leave in July 1997. Mr Lamfalussy's chosen successor is Wim Duisenberg, governor of the Dutch central bank and president of the Bank of International Settlements. EMI officials insisted that Mr Duisenberg — a passionate supporter of monetary union — would not automatically become head of the European Bank.

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Societies fight for life

Mutual admiration is becoming a thing of the past, writes Teresa Hunter

BUILDING societies could disappear completely unless they significantly undercut the banks on mortgages and savings, delegates were told on the eve of their annual conference in Birmingham yesterday.

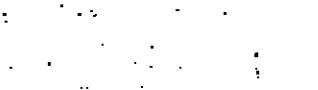
are not just different but are better than their financial institutions," he said.

ROVER will remain in the Rover until the turn of the century, says BMW chief Bernd Pischetsrieder yesterday.

Labour casts doubt on level of Railtrack registrations

world market for spirits would melt down.

ALLIED Domecq yesterday poured cold water on speculation that it was about to embark on a demerger.



There's a new deposit of £500

TOURIST RATES - BANK SELLS

Australia 1.88	France 7.5875	Italy 2.300	Singapore 2.975
Austria 15.80	Germany 2.2500	Malta 0.590	South Africa 6.41
Belgium 46.20	Greece 360.00	Netherlands 2.5175	Spain 187.25
Canada 2.0150	Hong Kong 11.41	New Zealand 2.1575	Sweden 10.50
Cyprus 0.8550	India 53.22	Norway 9.71	Switzerland 1.6250
Denmark 8.73	Ireland 0.8425	Portugal 232.25	Turkey 111.961
Finland 7.13	Israel 4.87	Saudi Arabia 5.64	USA 1.4775

Supplied by NatWest Bank (excluding Indian rupee and Israeli shekel)

Ionica targets BT with digital radio phone service

Nicholas Bannister
Technology Editor

BRITISH Telecom, already losing 60,000 customers a month to the cable companies, faces even greater competition following the launch yesterday of Ionica's residential phone service.

Cambridge-based Ionica aims to undercut BT by up to 20 per cent using digital radio signals, rather than conventional copper lines, to link homes to its network.

Chief executive Nigel Playford said the service would be offered in the Eastern region first and then rolled out to neighbouring regions every

two months. A national network could be completed in two years.

He said the group aimed to have about one million customers — 5 per cent of the UK residential and small business market — by the year 2000, although profitability required only 2 per cent.

Initially its prices will be set at fixed rates below those of BT — rental charges at 20 per cent less and charges for local, national and international calls at 15 per cent.

Ionica's basic service will also include a number of features, such as call barring, for which BT customers pay extra, and others which BT does not yet offer.

Every Ionica line, for exam-

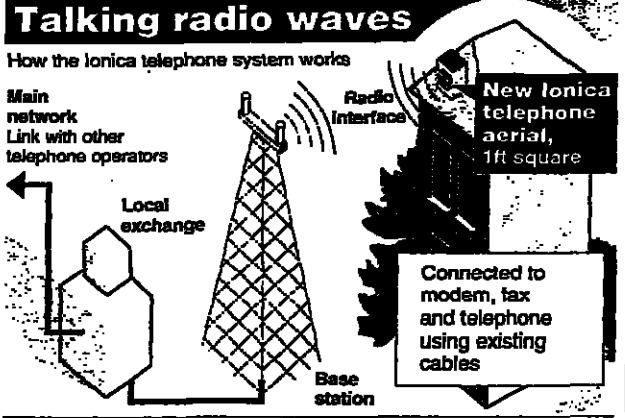
ple, will have three numbers with distinctive ringing tones. "It means that if you are watching football on television and the phone rings, you can stay where you are because the ringing tone will tell you if the call is for the kids," Mr Playford said.

A flat, foot-high, octagonal aerial mounted on the outside of the house is linked by a single wire to an internal telephone socket that is fully compatible with existing equipment, including computer modems and faxes.

Mr Playford said Ionica, whose shareholders include Yorkshire Electricity, Northern Electric and Telecom Finland, had invested £150 million so far and would probably need a further £200 million to complete a nationwide network. The company might be floated on the stock market next year.

The company believes it will get a boost from the introduction later this year of number portability, which allows customers to change telephone companies without changing numbers.

BT is expected to reveal its first year-on-year net loss of residential customers when it announces full year results on Thursday. Profits are expected to be about 9 per cent up at around £2.9 billion mainly as a result of lower redundancy costs.



AT&T ties Euro-knot

Nicholas Bannister

AMERICA'S largest communications group, AT&T, is to mount its assault on the European business market through a joint venture with the Swiss, Swedish, Dutch and Spanish national telecom companies.

The five companies have agreed to create a pan-European communications and multimedia services company with 5,000 employees and revenues of more than \$50 billion.

AT&T is to inject almost all its European operations, including those in the UK into Unisource, the business tele-

com company owned by Swiss Telecom (PTT), Sweden's Telia, PTT Telecom Netherlands, and Spain's Telefonica.

Unisource is to buy up to 49 per cent of AT&T (UK).

Merrill Tutton, president of AT&T (UK), said the move was aimed to help the companies capitalise on the liberalisation of the European markets. However, AT&T (UK) would retain its traditional bilateral transatlantic telephone business and its card services.

The merger plan, which has yet to be approved by the British and European telecom authorities, would leave AT&T with a 40 per cent stake in Unisource, and the four other

partners with 15 per cent each. The enlarged Unisource would compete with Concert, the joint venture between British Telecom and its American partner MCI, and Global One, the joint venture between state-owned Deutsche Telekom and France Telecom and their US partner Sprint.

All three ventures are designed to provide multinational companies with one-stop shopping for their telecom needs. Mr Tutton said that, unlike the other two, Unisource would also provide multimedia services, consulting, outsourcing, systems integration and Internet services.

Telegraph profits hit despite rise in sales

Tony May

ASURGE of 47 per cent in newspaper prices helped to slash 59 per cent of first-quarter profits of the Telegraph group, which publishes Britain's biggest-selling UK broadsheet newspaper.

Profits were £6.6 million in the three months to March 31 against £16.3 million in the same period last year.

The fall came despite a 19 per cent rise in sales to £72.9 million for the quarter. It reflected higher production costs attributable to the Sunday Telegraph Magazine, launched in September 1995, and a fall in the contribution from John Fairfax Holdings — an associate company in Australia — of 40 per cent to \$5.9 million.

The group said demand for newspaper had levelled off and prices had stabilised.

Lord Stevens, chairman of United News and Media, which owns the Express group of newspapers, told yesterday's annual general meeting the group was making useful progress following its merger with MAI in April.

BOC ponders biotech exit

Ian King

BOC, the industrial gases and healthcare group, yesterday indicated that it is considering selling its loss-making biotechnology division.

Announcing a 12 per cent jump in half year pre-tax profits to £217.4 million, chief executive Danny Rosenkranz said the company was "seeking a solution" at the division, which is developing blood replacement products.

However, Mr Rosenkranz said BOC had no plans to close the division, on which it spent \$9 million during the period.

He added: "We are attempting to find a solution for it, either through a partnership, a sale or some sort of arrangement."

But Mr Rosenkranz insisted that BOC had no plans to sell its healthcare division, where profits fell during the period, and where the outlook was "pretty flat" for the rest of the year.

He said the division's profits had been hit by falling demand for its anaesthesia ma-

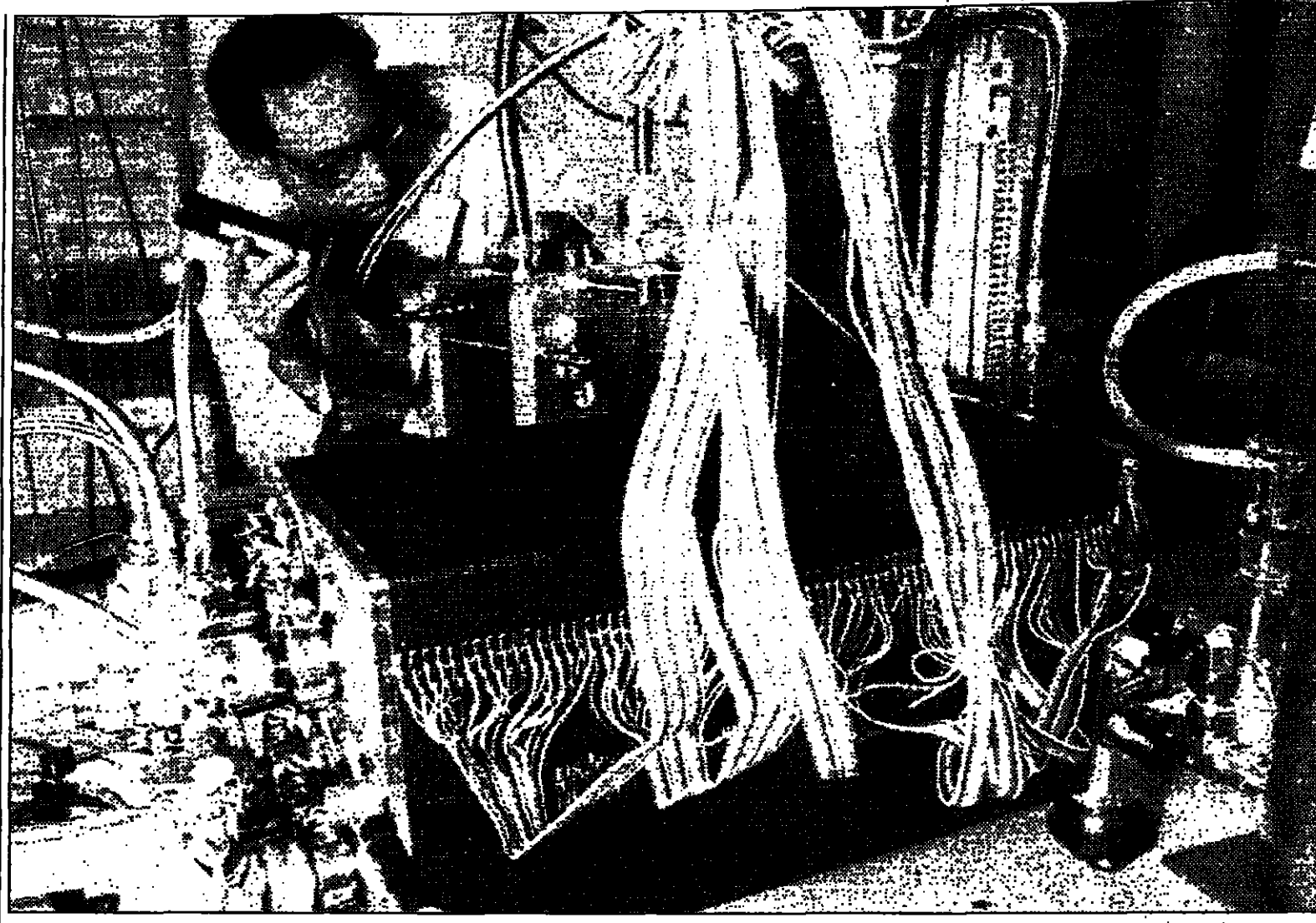
chines in America, due mainly to healthcare changes there, while Forane, BOC's inhaled anaesthetic product, continued to face stiff pricing pressure from competitors including Medeva.

Mr Rosenkranz went on: "The division has a strong return on assets, it is cash generating and has a long-term future within the group. Everything in the group has a price, even BOC has a price, but it is not for sale. We have not touched it around."

Elsewhere, there was better news from BOC's fast-growing vacuum technology and distribution services arm, which is now the second-biggest division in the group.

Mr Rosenkranz said the division, which numbers Marks & Spencer among its main customers, had enjoyed "strong" sales, but warned of a possible fall in demand for semi-conductors, another product made by the unit.

BOC shares closed up 7p to 831p on the results.



Motoring on... Daimler Benz technicians have produced a new fuel cell for the electric car Necar II. The car, which has no emissions and is powered by a reaction between hydrogen and oxygen, can carry six people and travel at speeds of more than 100km an hour with a range of 250km

GA cites weather as profits fall and drivers pay more

Outlook

Pauline Springett

WE HAD BEEN warned. Earlier this month General Accident had said its first-quarter results for 1996 would be significantly lower than for the same period last year. The company blamed cold weather in the UK and North America for a rise in claims. The shares slid accordingly and the market braced itself for the worst.

The ploy, if that's what it was, certainly worked as far as the City was concerned. Profits had fallen sharply, reflecting a £70 million hit from property claims for severe weather. That helped to make the group's worldwide underwriting loss £96 million, compared to £14 million last year.

The City decided that the figures could have been a lot worse. Analysts appeared to concur with the company that its underlying performance was satisfactory.

But GA's ordinary customers are probably more interested in their insurance premiums being carefully watched by rivals.

Bob Scott, chief executive, said that private motor claims had resulted in an underwriting loss for the first quarter of £9 million, compared to a £1 million profit last year, caused not only by bad weather but increased competitive pressure and steadily rising liability payments.

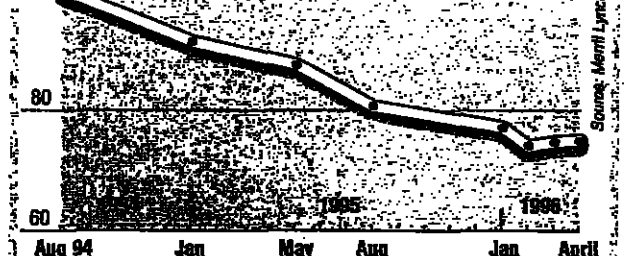
The upshot of this for GA's 700,000 UK private motor policyholders is that the company introduced a 4 per cent rise in car premiums at the beginning of April. So far, this had not resulted in an exodus of customers, although there had been little time for the rise to bite, he conceded.

Direct Line, the telephone insurance subsidiary of Royal Bank of Scotland, unveiled a 90 per cent slump in its half-year prof-

General Accident

Stock market value	£2.13bn	Main activity:	Mainly operates general insurance in the UK, US, Canada and Europe. Also has life operations. Recently bought Provident Mutual
Share price	65.4p ▲ 1.5p		
Worldwide	24,950		

How private motor premiums have recently changed in the UK



(Figs do not relate specifically to GA) Index shows national cost saving which could have been achieved by switching motor insurers on any of the above dates

its recently, blaming bad weather and competition.

Mr Scott said GA's decision to increase its motor premiums was being carefully watched by rivals. The key is whether they follow suit, or if GA, which also increased its commercial motor premiums by 6 per cent, puts up prices more, as it would like to do.

Steven Bird, of brokers Merrill Lynch, said he did not believe there would be a surge in the cost of motor premiums. There was still too much competition for business and he warned that unless insurers increased insurance premiums by 4 to 5 per cent a year, they could not cover their rising claims costs.

Of course the prospect, albeit small, of premiums starting to rise, was also a factor in the City's reaction to the results. Premiums generally have been fairly low for many types of insurance for some time in

News in brief

600 jobs to go at Littlewoods Pools

MORE than 600 jobs are set to go at Littlewoods Pools as part of an efficiency drive that will also see the closure of its Glasgow-based administrative centre. The shake-up will reduce to 1,350 the number of workers employed by the football pool division of the family-owned Littlewoods retail empire and will help the business gear up to growing competition from the National Lottery.

Littlewoods said it was further rationalising the business with heavy investment in technology aimed at streamlining its coupon-handling operations. Around 318 jobs will go with the closure of the Hillington plant near Glasgow. Part-time and casual workers will bear the brunt of a further 280 job losses in Liverpool and Birkenhead. — Patrick Donovan

PowerGen sells stake

THE American joint venture Avon Energy moved closer to completing a £1.7 billion takeover of Midlands Electricity yesterday when PowerGen sold it a 21 per cent stake in the regional electricity company — only pausing to collect a \$59 million profit on the deal. PowerGen built up the stake when it launched its own £1.9 billion bid for MEB last autumn.

But its ambitions were thwarted nearly three weeks ago when Trade Secretary Ian Lang blocked the attempted takeover. Avon immediately moved in and now controls about 30 per cent of MEB shares having built up a stake of 8 per cent itself. PowerGen said it had accepted the 440p a share offer from Avon, the venture made up of General Public Utilities and CINergy. — Simon Beavis

Stevens' £234,000 pay-off

PROUDFOOT, the international management consultancy group formerly chaired by United News and Media chairman Lord Stevens, has made him a £234,000 final pay-off in respect of an unfunded pension plan. The pay-off, disclosed in Proudfoot's annual report, was made in the same year that the company notched up full-year pre-tax losses of £1.9 million, against pre-tax profits of £11.2 million the previous year. Lord Stevens, who left the group last year, received pensions contributions of £293,341, along with a salary of £59,341. — Ian King

Whitbread lands Labatts deal

WHITBREAD yesterday snapped up Labatts Brewing UK, the British brewing arm of the Canadian-based drinks group owned by Belgian brewer Interbrew, in a deal which analysts said was worth just over £20 million. Whitbread has also bought exclusive distribution, marketing and brewing rights for all Labatts' brands — which include Rolling Rock, Labatt Blue and Labatt Ice — in Britain and Ireland. — Ian King

Sir Rocco set to resign

THE Forte dynasty's 15-year struggle for control of the Savoy Hotel Group ended quietly yesterday when the company said Sir Rocco Forte had indicated he would be resigning at a board meeting next Monday. Sir Rocco's resignation follows Granada's £3.6 billion acquisition of his hotel and leisure empire last January. Also resigning will be Sir Anthony Tennant, who became chairman of Forte during the closing stages of the bid. — Ian King

Firms shun EU opt-out

Workface/ Works councils are here but to what effect, asks Seumas Milne

THE British government's opt-out from European Works Councils — one of only two measures so far passed under the Social Chapter — is fast proving to be a dead letter. Not only are the large number of British companies with significant continental workforces obliged to set up Europe-wide consultative councils, but not one of the 150 or so up and running has excluded their British employees.

With four months to go until the 1994 works council directive comes into force, the Engineering Employers' Federation (EEF) has swallowed its opposition to the principle and is now busy proselytising among UK companies, urging them to make voluntary arrangements before a tighter, legally-binding EU process is imposed in September.

The contrast between this

pragmatic approach and the ideological resistance of the business lobbies and government ministers is striking.

But at least 300 British companies will have to set up European works councils if a Blair government signs up to the Social Chapter and British workers are included in the works council headcount, along with at least 1,000 foreign employees.

Under the Brussels directive, all companies with more than 1,000 EU employees outside Britain and with at least 150 in each of two continental member states have to set up a Europe-wide employee body for information and consultation, which must meet at least once a year. Although the councils will have no powers, they will have the right to be

consulted on proposals for takeovers, mergers, large-scale redundancies and new working methods.

Mr Reid says no firm had even raised the possibility of excluding British workers. UK companies that have already established European works councils include GKN, NatWest, BT, Pilkington and ICI. But the majority will be forced to take the formal route, under which they must choose to be "headquartered" in another EU state for works council purposes, as minimum terms will vary from country to country. Most are likely to opt for Ireland, which looks likely to have the most corporate-friendly regime.

There is a widespread union view that, at the very least, the councils provide a regular forum for shop stewards to exchange information. But the tale of Allan Bielek, a GMB union official, is cautionary. He attended Pilkington's inaugural European works council meeting last November as an adviser but four months later, when the company announced 1,900 redundancies, he heard about them on the radio.

NatWest Interest rates

NatWest announces the following interest rates, effective from 13 May 1996:

Savings	Gross Rate per annum	Gross CAR	Net Rate per annum
Fixed Rate TESSA <small>Tax Free Savings - interest rate paid quarterly</small>	7.250%	7.45%	N/A
Fixed Rate TESSA Feeder <small>Interest paid quarterly</small>	7.250%	7.45%	5.80%

The rates for all other personal savings accounts remain unchanged. Where appropriate, lower rate tax (currently 20%) will be deducted from interest credited or paid (which may be reclaimed by resident non-taxpayers). Otherwise (for example, subject to the required registration form), interest will be paid gross. The Gross Rate is the rate paid before deducting income tax. The Gross Compounded Annual Rate (CAR) is the rate where gross interest payments are reinvested in the account during the year. The Net Rate is the rate paid after the deduction of lower rate income tax, currently at 20%.

NatWest

National Westminster Bank Plc, 41 Louthbury, London EC2P 2BP

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دنيا 2015

Racing

Dushyantor can stake Derby claim

Graham Rock

HENRY CECIL'S unbeaten Derby hope Dushyantor (3.40) can win the Home-owners Dante Stakes at York today, and a decisive victory would make him clear ante-post favourite for next month's Epsom classic.

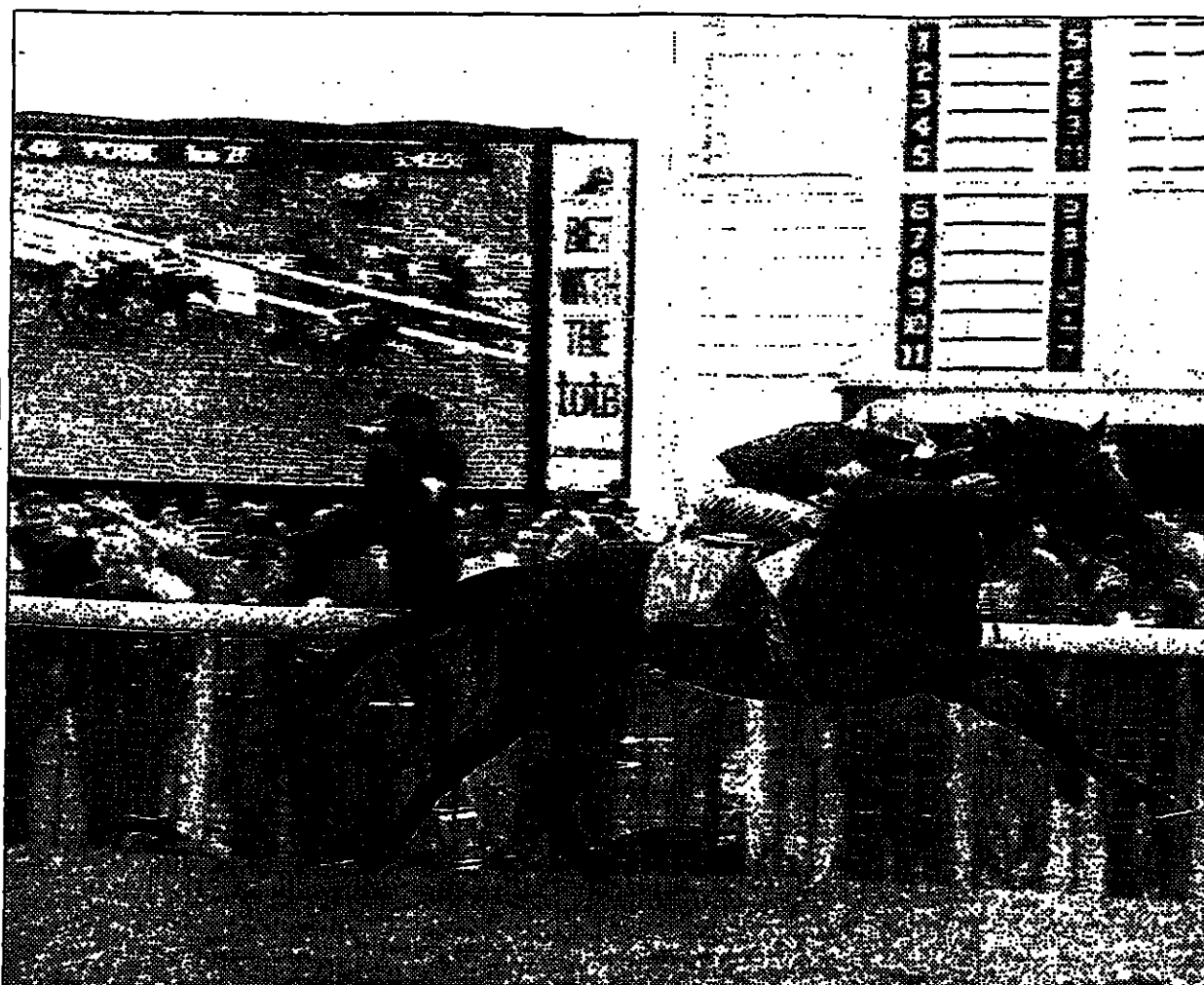
Another well-bred colt, closely related to Spectrum, he won impressively on his debut at Newbury last month, squeezing through a gap on the rails to beat The Dilettanti by five lengths. The runner-up did little for the form, but the Newmarket next time, albeit on Easter ground.

Glory Of Dancer has probably achieved most on paper so far. The winner of the Gram Critarian in Milan last autumn, he joined Paul Kelly-way's stable during the close season, and finished a good second for his new stable in the Thresher Classic Trial at Sandown, running Santillana to a neck, conceding 6lb to the winner.

He does not have the scope of Dushyantor, though, and Henry Cecil's colt, ridden by Willie Ryan in the absence of the suspended Pat Eddery, can improve to underline his Derby chance.

Royal Danze (3.05), who won three of his final five races last year, looked the sort to progress and win races as a four-year-old. He was just jipped by Stuffed on his reappearance at Thirsk, but this improving gelding is weighted to win the Home-owners Sprint Handicap.

Magnificent Style put behind her the memory of a disappointing run when fourth to Prickett at Newmarket to



Winning reflections... Magnificent Style's Musidora Stakes win is mirrored on the big screen at York

win yesterday's Tattersalls Musidora Stakes. Michael Kinane sent her into the lead from the start at a good pace and, although challenged two furlongs from home, she drew clear in the closing stages.

Pat Eddery had tried to settle her in the race, she had pulled hard, and she had felt the firm ground when trying to challenge.

Magnificent Style has a high knee action and would be unsuited by fast ground at Epsom. Nonetheless, she lived up to her name yesterday, and is now a best priced 10-1 with Hill's for the Oaks. Prickett remains a firm favourite at 11-8 (6-4).

Magnificent Style was the highlight of an up-and-down day for Kinane, who had earlier won on Dance Parade. He collected a two-day suspension for hitting Humourless with unreasonable force in the Shepherd Handicap, in which Tim Sprake captured a renewed challenge out of Dombey, who quickened close home to beat Kinane's mount by a head.

York runners and riders with form guide

- 2.00 Mile Handicap
2.15 Royal Stakes (handicap)
2.30 Royal Stakes (handicap)

- 3.40 Dushyantor (colt)
4.10 Dushyantor (colt)
4.40 Dushyantor (colt)

Hereford (N.H.)

- 1.45 Handicap
2.15 Handicap
2.40 Handicap

Huntingdon (N.H.) tonight

- 5.10 Handicap
5.40 Handicap
7.10 Handicap

2.00 MILE HANDICAP

- 2.00 MILE HANDICAP
2.15 ROYAL STAKES (handicap)
2.30 ROYAL STAKES (handicap)

3.40 DUSHYANTOR (colt)

- 3.40 DUSHYANTOR (colt)
4.10 DUSHYANTOR (colt)
4.40 DUSHYANTOR (colt)

1.45 HANDBICAP

- 1.45 HANDBICAP
2.15 HANDBICAP
2.40 HANDBICAP

5.10 HANDBICAP

- 5.10 HANDBICAP
5.40 HANDBICAP
7.10 HANDBICAP

2.35 HAMMILLON HANDICAP

- 2.35 HAMMILLON HANDICAP
2.40 HAMMILLON HANDICAP

4.10 HANDBICAP

- 4.10 HANDBICAP
4.15 HANDBICAP
4.20 HANDBICAP

2.50 ST RICHARDS SCHOOL

- 2.50 ST RICHARDS SCHOOL
2.55 ST RICHARDS SCHOOL

6.10 HANDBICAP

- 6.10 HANDBICAP
6.15 HANDBICAP
6.20 HANDBICAP

2.35 HAMMILLON HANDICAP

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2.40 HAMMILLON HANDICAP

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7.45 HANDBICAP
7.50 HANDBICAP

Perth National Hunt card tonight

- 6.55 Crystal
7.15 Crystal
7.35 Crystal

7.55 FINEST

- 7.55 FINEST
8.05 FINEST
8.15 FINEST

8.55 FINEST

- 8.55 FINEST
9.05 FINEST
9.15 FINEST

Results

- YORK
2.00 (1st)
2.15 (2nd)
2.30 (3rd)

6.55 HAMMILLON HANDICAP

- 6.55 HAMMILLON HANDICAP
7.05 HAMMILLON HANDICAP

8.55 FINEST

- 8.55 FINEST
9.05 FINEST
9.15 FINEST

9.55 FINEST

- 9.55 FINEST
10.05 FINEST
10.15 FINEST

PLACED

- PLACED
PLACED
PLACED

7.25 ALBERT DOWNS

- 7.25 ALBERT DOWNS
7.35 ALBERT DOWNS

8.55 FINEST

- 8.55 FINEST
9.05 FINEST
9.15 FINEST

9.55 FINEST

- 9.55 FINEST
10.05 FINEST
10.15 FINEST

PLACED

- PLACED
PLACED
PLACED

7.25 ALBERT DOWNS

- 7.25 ALBERT DOWNS
7.35 ALBERT DOWNS

8.55 FINEST

- 8.55 FINEST
9.05 FINEST
9.15 FINEST

9.55 FINEST

- 9.55 FINEST
10.05 FINEST
10.15 FINEST

PLACED

- PLACED
PLACED
PLACED

Quinn caught in crossfire as Lynch loses his double appeal

FERGAL LYNCH begins a 12-day suspension today as the Jockey Club disciplinary committee yesterday turned down appeals against two six-day bans meted out to the apprentice rider in the space of three days last week.

Lynch was judged guilty of irresponsible riding when second on Letuce at Haydock on May 6 and his mount disqualified and placed last. Then on May 8 he was found guilty of the same offence after winning on Montecristo at Chester, and was again placed last.

Rupert Arnold and Rae Guest, respective trainers of Letuce and Montecristo, lodged the appeals, but the Jockey Club upheld the Haydock and Chester stoppages.

"We thought we had an argument that Fergal was only guilty of careless riding and that the interference didn't affect Letuce's placing, but we had a very thorough, fair hearing," commented Arnold.

Guest said: "We had the usual fair hearing. We thought we had a good chance of getting the race back."

Both Arnold and Guest had their deposits returned. Richard Quinn's appearance as a witness at the appeal proved costly as he had to give up the ride on Dance Parade, who won the opening event at York ridden by Mick Kinane. Quinn would have picked up around £750 from his share of the winning prize money from Dance Parade.

"I had to use a train to London, two sets of taxis, and an aeroplane to get here," said Quinn. "I missed the winner of the first race and had to get off Madly Sharp. I will inquire the Jockey Club but don't expect to get more than £50."

Quinn will take over from Pat Eddery on the Michael Staines-trained Soviet Linc in Saturday's £125,000 Lockinge Stakes at Newbury. Kieren Fallon was offered the ride, but has been claimed to ride at Thirsk.

RACELINE
9930 168+
YORK
HEREFORD
PERTH
HUNTINGDON

Cricket

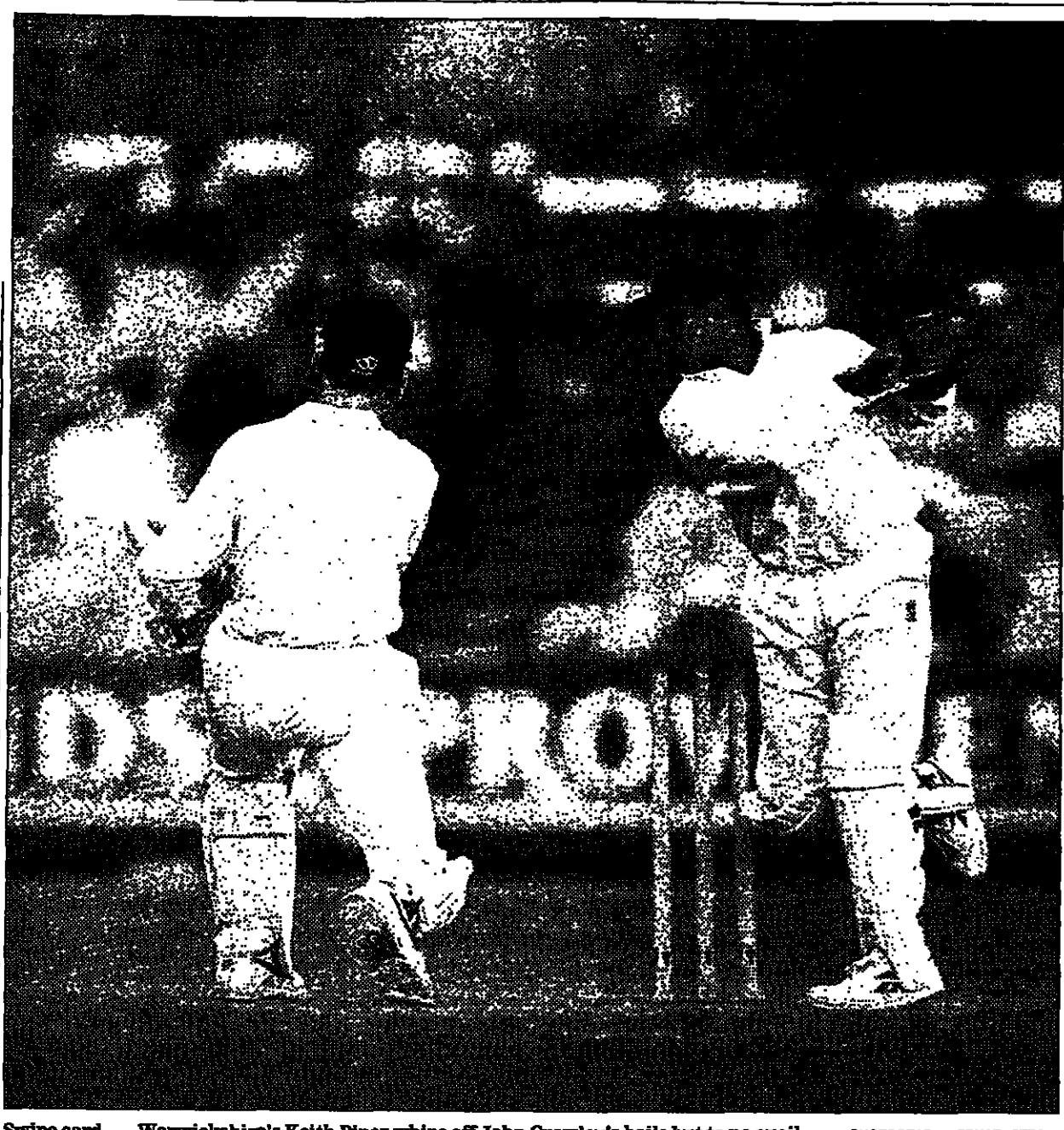
B&H Cup: Lancashire v Warwickshire

Lloyd hits high notes

David Hopes at Old Trafford

While many desparately analyse the secrets behind Warwickshire's success, Lancashire's rather a different tack: they just keep beating them. Victorious over Warwickshire in the three domestic competitions in which they met last season, they maintained the sequence in their Benson & Hedges group the yesterday by squeezing a one-wicket win with a ball remaining.

for six that had seemed just out of their grasp. Lloyd's self-belief must have been fuelled by the knowledge that he had done it all before. Last season he thrashed a six off the last ball to beat Leicestershire as Lancashire, with 318 for five, set a competitive record for a side batting second. This time it was the last man Peter Martin, with four leg byes against an in-crowd Dermot Reeve, who made winning contact.



Swipe card... Warwickshire's Keith Piper whips off John Crawley's balls but to no avail

Kent v Glamorgan

Morris torments Kent

Jeremy Alexander at Canterbury

BLISTERING innings by Hugh Morris took Glamorgan to their first quarter-final since 1990. His unbeaten 136 off 100 balls propelled them past Kent's modest 206 for nine for the loss of two wickets. Kent, conceding three places to the early level-pegging with James Morris rased away to 50 of 38 balls, 100 off 68 and eventually 214 for and a six. Their opening stand of 181 in 25 overs was a county record and made success a formality.

Glamorgan embarked on a supposition of 38.4 and, on that basis, got home with six overs to spare. After early level-pegging with James Morris rased away to 50 of 38 balls, 100 off 68 and eventually 214 for and a six. Their opening stand of 181 in 25 overs was a county record and made success a formality.

Gloucestershire v Hampshire

Alleyne goes a long way

Chris Hewett at Bristol

THE Gloucestershire physiotherapist failed to ignite as this season's Benson & Hedges campaign warmed up a degree or two here, yet Hampshire contrived to burn their own fingers. They missed a quarter-final place by 21 runs and will still be wondering how.

And later Wales, happy enough to leave the new ball to others after his long flight from Jamaica, suffered an unusual degree of frustration as he bowled through his overs. Rob Cunliffe's application and some sensible acceleration late on from Mark Alleyne — both batsmen reached the 70s before falling to Winston Benjamin and Cardigan Connor respectively — saw Gloucestershire set a challenging total of 272 on a distinctly 205-ish pitch.

caught in the deep by Mike Smith with his second delivery, and with his sixth he saw the Hampshire captain John Stephenson held by Tony Wright at short cover. Coupled with an equally influential over from the slow left-armer Richard Davis, who had already sent back Morris and Robin Smith in the space of five deliveries, Hampshire's strikes were enough to take Gloucestershire home. For all its commendable grit, the Hampshire tail was left with too much wagging to do.

Somerset v Essex

Essex Law unquestioned

David Foot at Taunton

THIS was a thoroughly proficient, if no more than academic, eight-wicket win for Essex — and a dispiriting result for Somerset. A sensational triumph belonged to Stuart Law, the Queenslander who yesterday completed his third hundred in four days.

Dakin plunders gold prize from unlucky Morris

Dakin plunders gold prize from unlucky Morris

JON DAKIN's unbeaten 108 steered Leicestershire to a four-wicket victory over Durham with two balls to spare at Grace Road yesterday. With Leicestershire chasing 289, Dakin and Darren Maddy (61) shared a fifth-wicket stand of 153.

Scoreboard

Table with 2 columns: Team and Score. Includes Benson & Hedges Cup, Lancashire v Warwickshire, Somerset v Essex, and Glamorgan v Kent.

BRITISH UNIVERSITIES v MIDDLESEX

Table with 2 columns: Team and Score. Includes Middlesex v Warwickshire, Kent v Glamorgan, Gloucestershire v Hampshire, and Somerset v Essex.

IRELAND v SURREY

Table with 2 columns: Team and Score. Includes Surrey v Warwickshire, Kent v Glamorgan, Gloucestershire v Hampshire, and Somerset v Essex.

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE v YORKSHIRE

Table with 2 columns: Team and Score. Includes Yorkshire v Warwickshire, Kent v Glamorgan, Gloucestershire v Hampshire, and Somerset v Essex.

Rugby Union

Heineken League

Neath 45, Pontypridd 25

Neath clinch Welsh title

Robert Armstrong

NEATH clinched the Heineken League title with a spectacular seven-try victory over the Welsh Cup holders Pontypridd that sent the capacity home crowd into raptures at The Gnoll last night.

Five minutes before half-time Ponty signalled their willingness to push Neath to the wire when the big lock Prosser scored in the left corner after shrewd work by Jenkins. But a minute from the interval Neath extended their lead to 21-10 with a third converted try, this time by the scrum-half Bridges, who charged home from 12 metres thanks to a pass by Steve Williams.

Anything less than seven tries would have allowed Cardiff to retain the title by virtue of their crushing victory over Llanelli, but Neath staged a momentous finale with four tries in the final half-hour, the last scored by their No. 8 Steve Williams.

Both Neath and Cardiff finished level on 72 points having gained a maximum five points each last night, but the Welsh All Blacks scored an aggregate 121 tries compared with Cardiff's 119.

Cardiff's 11-try feast all in vain

IT WAS a valiant attempt but in the end Cardiff's 11 tries in the 65-13 humiliation of Llanelli were only enough to salvage a narrow pride. Had they not wasted time attempting conversions last night they might even have taken the title, writes David Pinner.

along the right wing and scored, then Adrian Davies wriggled over in a confined space. Cardiff squandered three excellent chances before Jones sprinted over to help take the interval lead to 17-6.

Tennis

Master of his medium

Stephen Bierley in Rome

PASSING Master is an experience few have achieved in recent times, at least on clay. The Austrian's unbeaten run of 38 matches since his return to an end in Munich the week before last, but yesterday he returned to winning ways as he began his defence of the Italian Open title.

the ability of Americans to relieve their bowels over them. This was wonderfully bowled by the translators as "They just abuse the hospitality".

He has won four clay-court tournaments already this year, and although he cannot reclaim the world No. 1 spot from Pete Sampras by winning at the Foro Italico he may well return to the top of the pile before the French Open, which he won last year.

Agassi will have had practice prior to the French Open which begins on May 27. Sampras none. However, Chang took the title in Paris seven years ago without playing in any of the lead-up tournaments.

One American, Jim Courier, the French champion in 1992 and 1993, was very much in evidence yesterday, winning his first-round match against the Italian Renzo Furlan 6-3, 6-3. "In my opinion all the best clay-court players are here. It's not a weak tournament."

Master's victory over his fellow Austrian Herbert Wiltchnig was an even more decisive 6-3, 6-0. The No. 1 seed is hardly a charismatic player, although clearly one of the best on the tour. The surface he has won on is a clay court, but he has won it on grass, and he has won it on hard court. He has won it on all three surfaces.

Sport in brief

Simon Parke, who has not competed for six months after suffering from testicular cancer, will be in action again on Friday, writes Richard Jago. The 23-year-old Yorkshireman, who led England to their first title in Cairo in November, will make his tournament comeback a few miles down the road at Giza in the Al Ahram International. Parke is still ranked No. 5 in the world.

Saturday when she competes over 400 metres in the Bedfordshire International Games at Bedford. She will face stern competition from Donna Fraser, the British No. 2. Other Olympic contenders taking part include Stephanie Douglas, last year's fastest UK women's 100m runner.

Sailing

Eleven syndicates from nine countries have announced that they will challenge the holders Team New Zealand for the America's Cup in 2000. Entries closed at 6pm yesterday but there is a late-entry deadline of May 14 1997, by which time the number of challengers is expected to have reached at least 14.

Athletics

Sally Gunnell will run her first race of the season on

SportsGuardian

Euro 96 in new ticket row

John Duncan

EURO 96 was at the centre of another row yesterday after foreign tour operators who had been promised tickets were told they could no longer have them.

This could leave ticketless about 10,000 foreign fans who have paid for packages through legitimate companies, and it could put the Football Association in court. "We will be forced to take legal action against the FA to recover any losses," said Roger Moore, whose Danish company Travel's Easy bought tickets worth £38,100, many at a lunch organised by the official ticket supplier Synchro Systems. "The claims will run into millions. It is inexplicable and absurd."

An unnamed Norwegian company was in London yesterday seeking a meeting with Euro 96 organisers to confirm it would receive 5,000 tickets it has paid for.

Travel's Easy has been told by the Euro 96 director Glen Kirton that "tickets will not be issued which have been applied for on behalf of persons outside England".

However, in December Travel's Easy and about 20 other companies had attended an official lunch at which it was offered 200 tickets for any game. The invitation had been sent to the company in Denmark. Then Synchro wrote to Denmark saying that English addresses were needed for each application. Travel's Easy used the address of a friendly ticket agency in London.

"I asked them whether this was all legitimate and they said yes," said Moore. "They knew that this was intended for Scandinavia."

"Our priority at all times is the safety of spectators," said Kirton. "The regulations are specific about the need for an English name and address for each four tickets."

MIDFIELDER TRADES IN ONE ROBSON FOR ANOTHER



Another chance to samba... Emerson is greeted in now-familiar fashion by fans at the Riverside Stadium yesterday. PHOTOGRAPH: CARL RUTHERFORD

Boro do the Brazilian hat-trick

Michael Walker on Teesside's welcome for Emerson's £4 million worth of talent

IT WAS business as usual in Middlesbrough yesterday: smoke belched from the cooling towers dotted around the town, and the football club signed another boy from Brazil.

Emerson Moises Costa Branco, became the third Brazilian to join Middlesbrough

since October and engage in Bryan Robson's ambitious efforts to turn the Teesside club into a Premiership force.

The 24-year-old midfielder signed from Porto for £4 million. He played his last game for Bobby Robson's side on Sunday when Porto secured their second successive Portuguese title. So Emerson has

sacrificed another European Cup opportunity in order to play on Teesside.

Speaking through an interpreter Emerson, who has played for Brazil's youth team but not the senior side, said: "My message to Middlesbrough is that I have joined on a three-year contract and want to make them a big club just like I did at Porto."

His immediate targets were "a championship challenge and qualification for Europe" and later "to be up there win-

ning trophies in Europe and in England. Obviously I felt there was a great project going on at Middlesbrough and I was interested as long as Bryan Robson could convince me it was not just a dream."

Robson clearly did so, beating off the blandishments of Fiorentina, Internazionale and Sampdoria.

Emerson, a central midfielder, first came to the Boro manager's attention two years ago in a conversation with Bobby Robson. The former England manager saw traces of his former national captain in Emerson, although Bryan Robson was too modest to make that comparison yesterday, instead likening the Rio de Janeiro-born player to Paul Ince.

Emerson is also a Portuguese passport holder through marriage and therefore does not need a work permit to play in England. His international ambition is to win a senior Brazil cap.

Boro's manager said: "Emerson is top class. He can dictate the pace of the game, he is a strong tackler and a very good passer."

"He's naturally fit; eight per cent body fat, about the best you can get from a footballer. That's the level Cantona and

Giggs are on. He works very hard on a football pitch; Bobby Robson thinks he's an outstanding player and is disappointed to lose him. He's the next piece in the jigsaw."

The piece after that in Boro's transformation may be along in days rather than weeks. Fortuna Cologne's Danish forward Mikkel Beck has been

watched by Robson, and Jürgen Klinsmann's name has been linked with Boro as well as many other clubs.

The financing of such multi-million-pound deals, said Boro's chief executive Keith Lamb, has come from money through the turnstiles. Last season Boro sold all 26,100 season-tickets at the Riverside Stadium and with the new campaign three months away the club has already processed 6,000.

The increase in support — Middlesbrough sold 9,500 season-tickets at their previous home, Ayresome Park — in part persuaded Robson to reject the chance of becoming England coach.

"We established ourselves last season finishing 12th," he said. "Now we've got to go a stage further. What is encouraging is that I am able to persuade the likes of Emerson to come here."

The lost art of those wizards of the dribble



Vincent Hanna

WHEN I was 19 I had the rheumatic fever. Six weeks in bed with a wireless and all the comics I wanted. I've tried it since, but it wasn't the same. I still never miss the Archer Omnibus, so you can forget OJ Simpson; bring me the head of Simon Pemberton.

I had a picture stuck by the bed, cut from the Rover, of Nick Smith and Arnold Tabbs who were serious footballers. Our school was split between the Smith/Tabbs fans and the followers of Limpalong Leslie Thompson from the Wizard who dribbled a lot and passed to Ishmael, the Gypsy centre-forward.

Smith was a cultured inside-right (they were always "cultured") in the Raich Carter mould. Arnold Tabbs was a "baiting" wing half (they all were). No frills about Arnold: long shorts, centre parting. They had to hold him back when a swarthy Continental with slicked hair — you couldn't tell them apart in the Rover — gave him flowers and kissed him on the cheek before a game.

Continental's couldn't shoot, everyone knew that. It was the garlic or something. The great Geoffrey Green said so in the Times. Here he is in 1953: "One has always said that the day the Continentals learned to shoot would be the moment British football would have to look up. That moment has come at last... England's now end on the national stage now proclaims it to the skies."

That moment was the arrival of a group of cherry-shirted Hungarians led by a rotund army major called Ferenc Puskas. They took apart 6-3 an England side with Alf Ramsey, Billy Wright and Stanley Matthews. Suddenly schoolboys wanted to be deep-lying centre-forwards like Hildegard and shoot like Bossik.

Nick Smith wasn't worried: "They're too brittle, it's all too organised," he said. "They couldn't handle a battling wing-half like Arnold Tabbs."

Limpalong Leslie said he could put Ishmael through the Hungarian defence. We'll see what Gazza can do on Saturday when we play them for the 19th time.

We are still good at fooling ourselves. We believe that

swashbuckling football, and the odd great player, can beat a good team. Managers who have husbanded limited talent within a tightly organised framework, such as Clough or Mee, or Graham, have been rubbished even — no, especially — when they have won. As Virginia Wade politely put it: "Winners aren't popular, losers often are."

Something in our character prefers the reckless to the calculated. Whatever we thought of them in wartime, we Brits adore sporting kamikazes.

Take this football season. Kevin Keegan is a nice man with a passion for the game. His club has great traditions and amazing supporters. This season he spent £25 million and threw away the Premiership with kamikaze football. Then he promised to go on doing it. And they all cried: "We love you Kevin."

Try to imagine Kevin in charge of AC Milan or Bayern Munich with the same record. On second thoughts don't. Meanwhile Alex Ferguson spent peanuts, and won the Double with the help of talented youngsters, a great goalkeeper, a French genius, and good organisation. "Rotten Scottish swine," came the chorus.

SO UNITED beat Liverpool 1-0 last Saturday with what Paddy Cresswell described as "the best-organised midfield I have seen". And hanging, apparently, is too good for them.

Tommy Smith, that legendary Liverpool captain, paid grudging tribute. "Ferguson played it like an away European Cup match," he said. "Beckham and Giggs were pulled back. Butt and Keane smothered McManaman and Barnes. It looked like a load of crap — but we fell for it."

Tommy argues that Liverpool should have done better. "That's what the captain's there for. In the 1974 final Newcastle were all over us for half an hour, I told the lads to cut out the midfield and hit long balls. We won 3-0. On Saturday we never got a decent shot on goal."

"People forget that Matt Busby hated to give away goals," said Paddy. "He would order us to fill midfield for the first 15 minutes. Even George Best would tackle back. The team played like that on Saturday. Not pretty — but totally prepared."

Now if only Nick Smith, or Limpalong Leslie, or Kevin Keegan had been in charge, we could have had a final to be proud of: a great British occasion full of entertainment, with plenty of goals. Preferably with both sides losing.

Guardian Crossword No 20,653

Set by Araucaria

Across

- 1 Almost the optimum ancient city (6)
- 5 The end of 11 is in the show (8)
- 9 Appeal about deficiency to student who crossed the picket line (8)
- 10 Spirit returned when there isn't any honey drink (8)
- 11 Make out the joke in 21's ?? (6,5)
- 13,18 Paddy-whack 21's girl (8)
- 14 Take part in organising really small operation (4-4)
- 17 Two kinds of water to drink? Cheers! (4-4)
- 18 See 13
- 20 Secret meeting's business — see revolutionary harged and die (6,6)
- 23 Snatch a little sleep? (8)
- 24 Freshly turned line would briefly have changed everything (3,5)

Down

- 2 First of 11 that man is going to (4)
- 3 Detad (4-5)
- 4 Raising of Spanish city makes the mouth water (8)
- 5 (Self-supporting) heathen advertisement (turns up) (5,10)
- 6 Free one odd clue from mockery (8)
- 7 Involuntary thoughts about upsetting the Queen Mother (5)
- 8 Coward's End, novel of laid down arms and evasive steps (5-5)
- 12 Tongue is eaten by horse — to make it stick? (10)

Solution tomorrow

21 Stuck? Then call our solutions line on 0881 222 222. Calls cost 39p per min. cheap rate, 49p per min at all other times. Service supplied by ATS.

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